PHANTASMAGORIA
IAN DANIELS

About the Artist and Author

Ian Daniels is a professional painter and illustrator. He has produced artwork for gallery exhibitions, book jackets, fully illustrated books, and numerous other projects whose themes include fairy tales, dreams, ghosts, and vampyres.

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IAN DANIELS

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PART I

PHANTASMAGORIA

That is not dead which can eternal lie
And with strange aeons even death may die.

—H. P. Lovecraft, *The Necronomicon*

A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT

Introduction & Background

LIGHTNING SLASHED VIOLENTLY, SHREDDING THE black sky. Thunder raged and roared, blasting the dark mountains. Wild winds whipped the surface of the lake into a frenzy, and the rains lashed like a phantom—savage, ruthless, and bitter.

It was indeed a "dark and stormy night" when a gathering of English literati agreed to each write a tale of supernatural horror. The group had gathered in the summer of 1861 at Villa Diodati, Switzerland, close to Lake Geneva. As the storm thrashed outside, Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, John Polidori, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Claire Clairmont recited haunting poetry and ghost stories. It was not only the blood-curdling wail of the night that chilled the blood and set hearts pounding. The stories they recited came from a book, originally written in German, that had recently been translated into French. This book was called *Fantasmagoriana*, and because of this gathering of writers and poets, it has a significant place in the history of English literature. The collection had its origin in *Gespensterbuch* (literally, "ghost book"), a five-volume anthology of German ghost stories.

Over the coming nights, the writers set about creating their own tales of gothic terror, the most famous of which became Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, her imagination fired by a nightmare in which a "pale student of unhallowed arts created the awful phantom of a

man." A lesser-known story was penned by John Polidori, titled *The Vampyre*, which is arguably the progenitor of the romantic Vampyre genre in English literature.

The original anthology of *Gespensterbuch* was published in Leipzig, Germany, between 1811 and 1815. A selection of short stories from the first two volumes received a French language translation by Jean Baptiste Benoit Eyries and was published in Paris during 1812. The full French title was *Fantasmagoriana, ou Recueil d'Histoires d'Apparitions de Spectres, Revenans, Fantomes, etc.* (Phantasmagoria: or an Anthology of the Histories of Apparitions of Ghosts, Spectres, Phantoms, etc.).

The title is derived from stage magician Étienne-Gaspard Robert's *phantasmagoria*. Robert was one of the original and most elaborate masters of a theatrical phenomenon known as the phantasmagoria, a type of magic lantern show where silhouetted puppets acted out macabre dramas, projected to audiences via the lantern. His presentations of the lantern were ingenious theatrical productions designed and performed to terrify the audiences. Murderous shadows and nightmarish apparitions would appear from nowhere and literally scare patrons out their seats. This macabre entertainment created quite a stir in the closing years of the eighteenth century, as both professionals and roaming showmen performed the sinister art. The phantasmagoria shows were sometimes held in old monasteries and chapels to heighten the performance, as the dim and gloomy ambience was ideal for spine-chilling drama.

FEAR AND THE SHADOW

Fear is usually regarded as a negative emotion. One psychological explanation for fear is that it is a defence mechanism, designed by nature to keep us safe. However, as a race, human beings seem to love being scared. Our predecessors paid to be frightened at a phantasmagoria show, and even in childhood we find ourselves not only not avoiding frightening sensations and situations, but seeking them out. We are bewitched by ghost stories; we *like* to be terrified. Perhaps we are seeking a deeper understanding of our fears, or of our part in the theatre of life and death. Perhaps we enjoy the adrenalin rush that comes when we are afraid. From horror films, lantern shows, and the telling of nightmarish tales through time to the rituals of our early ancestors' rites for the forest spirits, humanity has a deep curiosity for the all that is dark and mysterious.

It seems that experiencing fear in a safe environment, acknowledging our fears, facing them, and recognizing them, helps us to understand ourselves and to overcome those fears and see them for the illusion that many of them are.

Human interest in tales of horror and weirdness is perhaps a manifestation of the adventure impulse, curbed in most of us by physical circumstances; we cannot explore vast new worlds when we have to be back to work on Monday. In particular, scaring ourselves ignites a desire—perhaps a deep-lying spiritual need—to transcend the common limitations of time and space. This craving is not a desire to escape from reality, but rather an impulse to penetrate the truths which lie beneath the surface, to grapple with and dominate the mysteries of mortal existence. A liking for horror and eeriness could be dismissed as morbid or unhealthy, but it could also be said that it's unwholesome to deny the existence of our own darker shadows. If we face our fears, we can master them rather than project them out onto the world and onto others, which can reveal itself as irrational hatred, bullying, or illogical or delusional morality. Denying fear isn't only emotionally unwise, it could be physically dangerous. Many of the fears of nature are part of our makeup, inherited from a time when danger lurked in the dark primal forests; in this sense fears were—and still are—a valuable survival mechanism. Our task is to free ourselves from the prison of *exaggerated* fears by deepening our understanding and embracing creation in all its beauty—both dark and light.

Acknowledging our inner demons and fears is the first step towards overcoming them. Suppressed fears tend to take on the darkest, most horrifying shapes possible. Yet when we bring a fear out into the light of day, we realise that what we were so scared of (a) may never even happen; (b) may not be as devastating as we think; or (c) might not be that tough to handle. Having the courage to face fear can provide us with a spiritual breakthrough.

The Tarot of Vampyres is designed to help us face our fears—as well as our hopes, passions, and joys—by reconciling all the energies within ourselves into a balanced whole. The cards represent different elements, emotions, and events—some happy, some scary—that we encounter in life. The word *phantasmagoria* is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "... a constantly shifty complex succession of things seen or imagined...," which aptly describes the workings of both the cards and our own inner dynamics. Many of our fears are like the silhouetted figures projected onto a screen from a magic lantern deep within ourselves: exaggerated projections of ordinary objects. These fears are not our true selves—at least, they are not our *whole* selves—and they are forever changing.

The Shadow

In psychology, the dark side of human nature is often described as the alter ego, the id, or the lower self. The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung called it the "shadow." By "shadow" he meant the hidden side of the personality, the sum total of all those unknown or unpleasant qualities that we would prefer to hide. We all have a shadow; the challenge is to meet it face to face. As the shadow is a real part of us, psychological work begins with the recognition, confrontation, and resolution of shadow projections, until we finally accept the "dark" side of our personality.

As Jung saw it, the shadow is the part of the mind that is outside our awareness, and he called this the "personal unconscious" or

"personal shadow." This includes the conditioned part of us that we acquire from experiences in childhood when that which is unacceptable (as determined by the adults around us) is cast into shadow. By definition, the nature of the shadow is to hide. It hides like a ghost, outside the boundaries of consciousness. But these ghosts carry important messages from hidden parts of ourselves.

Our mind is adept at using irrational fears to protect itself from unknown primal emotions and instincts. We become rooted in a fear of the "other"—whether it be fear of others who seem different than us, unresolved psychological issues, or fears about our place in the natural cycles of life and death, love and separation. One of our biggest fears as humans is the fear of loss, whether of the self or of a loved one. On a personal level, the fear of losing the self often reveals itself when we experience romantic love. The Vampyre myth illustrates this idea with relish—both the fear and the ecstasy of surrender when merging with another in love, whether sexually or in the exchange of blood, which blurs the boundaries between self and other. On an inner level, this symbolises the surrendering of our ego into our original spiritual source or into the eerie realms of the unconscious*. Our conscious mind resists such surrender for fear of losing our identity, while our unconscious hungers for release from the tight grip of the ego, into a place of boundless love and belonging.

However, it is simplistic to assume that the shadow is simply "bad," as it is not strictly negative. Positive traits too can be rejected and repressed because they are unacceptable within a social or family milieu. We may repress our own ambition if we are taught to not hope for betterment in our life, in which case healthy ambition would

* The unconscious is often referred to as "the subconscious" in everyday conversation. As *unconscious* is the preferred scientific term, we'll use it in our journey through *Phantasmagoria*.

become part of our shadow. In this case, a person must learn to face this shadow aspect and integrate it into the personality. This is where *The Tarot of Vampyres* comes in: to help recognize the shadow and integrate it with the light.

THE HUNGER

In life we yearn not only to integrate the aspects of our self, but also to connect to that ineffable higher power: God, Spirit, the Divine, or any number or terms are used to describe this spiritual power. In *Phantasmagoria*, we'll call it the Everlasting. Our spiritual hunger is a reflection of the Everlasting's longing for us—an echo of divine desire which calls us back to itself, because the Everlasting is in love with all its creations. At our core, we crave the divine light from which we were separated when we came into earthly existence, just as the Everlasting craves our return. Although invisible to us, this divine light pulses like blood through all of creation; it is not bound by time or space, but is eternally reborn in every moment. The Vampyre myth expresses this deep desire to draw such spiritual life force into us through the physical act of consuming blood.

As well as a tale of gothic horror and romance, the Vampyre myth also illustrates an encounter with the higher self on a personal level, with the eternal promise of self-realization and the eventual curse-turned-joy. The dormant, tomb-bound Vampyre can represent our earthly existence and our longing for spiritual awakening. He is woken and rejuvenated by the inflow of untainted lifeblood, the abandoned, enraptured kiss which returns him from the material plane—where we are too often restless and entombed—to the spiritual reality of the world around us. The Vampyre "comes alive" after receiving blood, just as we yearn to receive spiritual force and become more alive.

Our view of the world as purely material is shaken apart by a realization that every atom in the Universe is embedded with a deeper meaning, a divinity that communicates with us directly. Our task is to awaken and to listen, to cast aside our redundant beliefs about ourselves, and to recognize that events and encounters appear in our everyday life from a divinity that is within each one of us. Our beliefs define our thoughts and our feelings, which are in turn connected directly to what manifests in our lives. By changing our beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about ourselves and the possible or impossible, we have the ability to shape reality. What we think we know about the world is often an illusion; at best it is a view limited by our current situation. By having the insight and courage to think differently, to awaken to an alternative belief, we can bring about the changes in our lives which we desire. We should have faith, and know that the life force within us is eternally in love with us—that the nurture of the Everlasting is always for our ultimate happiness. Then any anxiety and striving to control events would hinder us less, allowing the Everlasting to align events on our behalf.

The Vampyre myth also teaches us that times of hibernation and stillness are needed in order to regenerate and realign ourselves with the Everlasting that pervades all of nature. We need time to empty our mind and reconnect with the flow of that source. Our earthly and spiritual natures are reflections of each other, and both have equal importance. This is symbolised in the transformation from slumber after a time of inner questing and questioning. The cycle of life, death, and rebirth is a central theme of *Phantasmagoria*. Like folds of a ghostly shroud, it is our own shadows and the veils we create to protect our ego that conceal our connection with divinity. The divine light is flowing through us whether we recognize it or not. To flow with this source, we must discard self-illusion, refining our spiritual centre. Too often we muddy the waters by frantically

stirring to find answers; when we surrender to stillness, the waters naturally clear. The same is true when we surrender our logical and analytical mind to silence, in order to listen for the pulse that guides us to the light. In this respect, *The Tarot of Vampyres* is a wonderful tool to side-step our rational, self-perspective view and allow our deeper, unconscious self to reveal truths thorough magical instinct, imagination, and dreamscapes. These truths, which may have been altered or suppressed by the critical mind, allow us a wider understanding of a situation and greater freedom to explore it. When our deep self, or our unconscious vibration, is more closely in sequence with the flow of the Everlasting source, we understand the essence of things more clearly and how a situation or problem relates to the whole of life.

THE BLOOD ROSE

On the reverse of the cards we find a red rose blossoming in briar stems. The rose is a symbol that has a rich and ancient history, often with meanings that seem paradoxical. It is at once a symbol of purity and a symbol of lust, heavenly perfection and earthly passion, virginity and fertility, death and life. As a passive symbol, the rose is associated with regeneration, fecundity, and love, while also bearing the active principles of energy, lifeblood, and passion. The rose is the flower of the goddess Venus but also the blood of Adonis and of Christ. It is a symbol of transmutation—taking nourishment from the earth and turning it into a beautiful fragrant flower. That the flowers blossom by unfolding is symbolic of spiritual opening. The rose garden is a traditional symbol of Paradise, while in ancient Rome roses were grown in the funerary gardens to symbolise resurrection. The thorns have represented suffering and sacrifice as well as the sins of the fall from Paradise.

In addition to being a sign of both life and death, the rose has also been used as a sign of silence and secrecy. The term "sub rosa" (under the rose) refers to the demand for discretion whenever a rose was hung from the ceiling at a meeting in Medieval times. In Egyptian mythology, roses were sacred to Isis and were the flower of her son Hippocrates or the younger Horus, the god of silence.

These diverse and interwoven concepts are appropriate emblems for the Vampyre myth. Here the rose is a symbol of our unique life force. The blood rose on the reverse of the cards represents the four elements bound by the fifth element of spirit: fire as willpower and lust, water as emotion and love, air as pure illumination of thought, and earth in its silent unfolding into manifestation. The blood rose represents all the elements and energies of our being. These make up not only us, but the forces permeating all creation, from our earthly form to the layers of our conscious being and our unconscious reality.

Related to the blood rose is the symbol of a red rose on a cross, the *rose croix*, often used by various Rosicrucian groups. (Rosicrucianism is the theology of a secret society of mystics beginning around the sixteenth century, often related to Freemansonry and the Order of the Golden Dawn.) The rose was for them the living and blooming symbol of the revelation, an emblem of beauty, life, love, and pleasure. The cross represented the number four—the four elements as a structured form, while the rose represented the number five—spirit. To fix the five of spirit (rose) onto the four of the physical world (cross) was the goal of high initiation, an alchemy also symbolised by the blood of the Holy Grail.

THE NATURE OF MATTER & TIME

The recent scientific idea of "dark matter" provides a new understanding of what mystics refer to as "subtle matter," so compatibility between mysticism and science is quite real. If we are composed of subtle bodies made up of different types of subtle dark matter, and if we were capable of shifting our consciousness to these subtle bodies, then we would experience the world of that type of matter, much like mystical states of transcendence.

This would suggest that dark matter is just as "real" as visible matter, albeit in a subtler form. This suggests also that we have a spirit or soul, and it is partly physical, even though it is formless. Developing an awareness of these subtle energies helps us gather insights into *The Tarot of Vampyres'* cards, perhaps more so than does an intellectual approach. A more fluid awareness can help us live our lives with deeper understanding of our true nature and of our place in the Universe. We will then better understand the repercussions of our actions and decisions on personal, social, and global levels.

Humans view time as a quantity and thus think of a rose emerging from its seed. But could it be that both exist at the same time spiritually? How would a seed know how and when to bring forth the rose, if it does not already hold the experience of the rose within itself? The seed itself is not the beginning, but rather the product of a previous rose. This suggests that our thoughts and ideas have both their beginnings and their ends within themselves, making coincidences and correspondences, dreams, symbolism, and even psychic experiences a scientific probability. (This phenomenon was termed "synchronicity" by Jung, an idea related to scientist/philosopher/mystic Emanuel Swedenborg's Law of Correspondence, which states that there is a causal relationship between the natural, spiritual, and divine worlds.)

In the past our ancestors were very concerned with the proper time for planting crops, hunting, or beginning an undertaking, since they recognized the importance of the moment something was begun. Just as every rose seed contains the potential of a full-grown rose bush, the moment at which something is undertaken already contains the entire event, including its outcome. Beginning a hunt in the right frame of mind and with the right energy was crucial to success; to enhance the positive effects of a particular moment of time, ancient peoples evoked spirits through prayer, ritual, and the arts.

The Tarot can be seen in a similar way, as it is especially useful for revealing the essence of the present moment or situation and showing it in a new light. The present moment connects past and future, and this is where it is possible to resolve situations from the past and set new paths for the future.

However, the quality of time and the deeper essence of things are often forgotten in our modern, everyday lives. Taking time each day to still our mind, relax, breathe slowly and deeply, and create feelings of well-being will improve our understanding and emotional health. As we grow to understand reality and nature in a truer, wider manner, the events and imagery in our physical surroundings will appear in direct relation with our most accustomed feelings. One of the valuable mechanisms of the Tarot is to present us with alternative possibilities to ponder.

Mystical thought often views the spiritual and physical not as separate but as a series of layers, or dimensions. Our thoughts and feelings affect the subtle matter within us. A thought or feeling is a vibration in the matter, set into motion within our spirit, which eventually affects matter in the world around us. Thoughts affect our surroundings in a four-stage process: the thought has to be transferred from that creative, spiritual realm (the seed) into the ethereal

realm of feelings (the womb), which will affect the web of subtle matter through vibrations (conception). A thought stimulates the subtle matter—the ever-forming blueprint for things emerging into solid matter—by causing sympathetic vibrations in it and therefore moving its development into denser physical matter (birth). This process brings about the desired influence of the original seed, even at a distance. The four elements of the suits and the Court Cards represent the four stages of this process. Drawing into ourselves and then conducting these inner energies for our well-being and desires is a central concept within *The Tarot of Vampyres*.

The Seed—Fire—Scepters—Lords
The Womb—Water—Grails—Queens
Conception—Air—Knives—Princes
Birth—Earth—Skulls—Daughters

THE TAROT OF VAMPYRES

The Tarot of Vampyres applies symbolism from the Vampyre myth to illustrate the meanings of traditional Tarot cards. Such imagery connects us to the deep wellsprings that the Vampyre myths explore; light and darkness, death and rebirth, love, passion, and hunger are amongst the themes enacted. Our fears of loss and need for belonging are played out in these myths, too, whether as a thirst for eternal intimacy or as a need to heal our relationship to the earth and with our own ancestry and destiny. *The Tarot of Vampyres'* aim is to help us peer behind the veils of our waking and dreaming realities into the deeper meaning behind life. We can explore our motives or feelings—or the interaction between our conscious and unconscious, between ourselves, others, and the world around us—on a material and spiritual level. By studying and working with the Tarot, we build a more accurate understanding of the workings

of the Universe, ourselves, and other people, as well as recognizing our own unique place in the scheme of things. We interweave our thoughts and emotions with everything around us through our memories, meanings, and symbols. The symbolism of the cards reflects major symbolic themes from the Vampyre myths which are reflected in our own psychological makeup, allowing us to empathise, contemplate, and translate these themes within the security of our gothic imagination. Reading the cards should, above all, be fun and enchanting. The key to working with *The Tarot of Vampyres* is to play with the cards in a sense of wonder and a belief in your own creative imagination.

The names of the Court Cards vary from traditional titles but contain the same meanings. Here the traditional Kings are named Lords, while Queens remain the same. Knights are named Princes and the traditional Pages or Princesses are here called Daughters. The suits in *The Tarot of Vampyres* may differ from others, but again their symbolism retains traditional meanings. The fire suit is represented here by Scepters (most often known as Wands), the cross of the Ace highlighting the theme of facing our phantoms, which, like the vampyric defiance of the cross, is an assertive but courageous act. Cups are here called Grails because of their association with blood, while corresponding to the element of water and the realm of emotions. Swords (air) become Knives. Skulls represent the traditional Pentacles (sometimes known as Disks or Coins); as symbols of earth they embody physicality, the visible natural world, structure and foundation, work, wealth, sensation, and matters of the body.

The Tarot is our wheel of Phantoms. By this I mean it is a complete circle containing all different qualities, moods, and spirits—each with its particular ambience. These qualities are part of our human makeup in various degrees. These same essences shape all of nature. While each can have a positive or negative effect, none are "good" or "bad" in the normal sense, as our view is based on our

own perspective at any given time. A seemingly negative feeling or the learning of a difficult lesson are often required for growth, understanding, and our ultimate happiness. The journey of life may contain many obstacles, but overcoming these obstacles gives birth to greater understanding.

ALCHEMY

About the Cards

Holy wisdom is not light and thin like water,
but dark and thick like blood.

—C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*

Tarot is a card game that has been passed down through human history, developed out of our search for meaning in life, and it encompasses many shared truths and symbols. In earlier times it was probably in widespread use as an oracle to predict the future, especially within circles of mystical seekers of wisdom. Tarot card imagery and the card names themselves are intertwined with the wisdom of many civilizations, containing insights from a variety of sources—Egypt, Judaism, Paganism, European Mysticism, China, and India are just a few. These sources were perhaps derived from more ancient beginnings relating to shamanism and distant spirituality, primal myths, and storytelling.

The historical origins of Tarot cards is shrouded in darkness, but they seem to have certainly appeared in Europe during the fourteenth century. Early accounts of the cards are mentioned by Brother Johannes of Basel in 1377, and the use of a deck of Tarot cards by King Charles VI in Paris in 1393 (called the Marseille Deck) has been recorded. It is thought that Tarot cards were used before the fourteenth century, whether unrecorded or in secret, though since

about 1600, the Tarot has taken essentially the same form that we know today.

The Tarot deck is a set of 78 cards consisting of the 22 Major Arcana cards and 56 Minor Arcana, or suit, cards. The word *Arcana* is from the Latin *arcanus,* meaning "secret, hidden," possibly because it brings secrets out into the open where they can be analyzed and understood more clearly. This is likely the reason the Tarot has been referred to as "the universal key to understanding life."

MAJOR ARCANA

The 22 Major Arcana cards are divided into three types. The Fool, the Hanged Man, and Judgement are the Elemental Trumps: these personify the qualities of the three mother letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Next we have the seven Planetary Trumps, representing the planets and the double letters in Hebrew. The remaining twelve cards signify signs of the Zodiac, known as Zodiacal Trumps, and are connected to the simple letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each of the Major Arcana also has subtle influences from various planets, which are noted under the card meanings. In a very real way, the Majors could be viewed as each containing a set of 56 Minor cards, each one displaying characteristics of the essence of the Major card, especially when interpreted together. A number of varying systems exist, but you can use whichever you prefer. The following shows the individual cards' type and ruler along with the Hebrew letter it personifies in qualities and powers.

The Fool	Elemental Trump of Air	Aleph א (Ox)
The Magician	Planetary Trump of Mercury	Beth ב (House)
The Priestess	Planetary Trump of the Moon	Gimel ג (Camel)
The Empress	Planetary Trump of Venus	Daleth ד (Door)
The Emperor	Zodiacal Trump of Aries	Tzaddi צ׳ (Fish hook)
The Hierophant	Zodiacal Trump of Taurus	Vau ו (Nail)
The Lovers	Zodiacal Trump of Gemini	Zain ז (Sword)
Chariot	Zodiacal Trump of Cancer	Cheth ח (Fence)
Justice	Zodiacal Trump of Libra	Lamed ל (Ox Goad)
The Hermit	Zodiacal Trump of Virgo	Yod י (Hand)
Fortune	Planetary Trump of Jupiter	Kaph דכ (Palm of hand)
Strength	Zodiacal Trump of Leo	Teth ט (Serpent)
The Hanged Man	Elemental Trump of Water	Mem מם (Water)
Death	Zodiacal Trump of Scorpio	Nun ונ (Fish)
Temperance	Zodiacal Trump of Sagittarius	Samekh ס (Foundation)
The Devil	Zodiacal Trump of Capricorn	Ayin ע (Eye)
The Tower	Planetary Trump of Mars	Peh ף פ (Mouth)
The Star	Zodiacal Trump of Aquarius	Heh ה (Window)
The Moon	Zodiacal Trump of Pisces	Qoph ק (Back of the head)
The Sun	Planetary Trump of the Sun	Resh ר (Head)
Judgement	Elemental Trump of Fire	Shin ש (Tooth)
The World	Planetary Trump of Saturn, Elemental Trump of Earth	Tau ת (Cross)

MINOR ARCANA

We can now look at the Minor Arcana: the remaining 56 cards, including the Aces, numbered suit cards, and the 16 Court Cards. The Aces are the seeds of each of the suits, containing all the essences of the other cards in their suit, still unmanifested. They are the beginnings of the thoughts of their element and, in the same way that the Fool holds the potential for the other Major Arcana cards, the Aces are the spirits of the numbered elemental suit cards.

Suits

The Minor Arcana are divided into four suits, represented in *Phantasmagoria* as Scepters, Grails, Knives, and Skulls. Each card has an interpretation associated with its element and its numerical value, as well as its astrological correspondences. The cards within these suits are numbered 1 (the Aces) through 10 and also include the Court Cards—the Lords, Queens, Princes, and Daughters. The Minor Arcana cards represent the more minor and practical ups and downs in daily life.

Scepters are associated with the Will: the element of fire and energy, action, passion, creativity, willpower, spirituality, and enterprise. They can be glorious, blazing, and warm or explosive and lustful. In astrology, Scepters are attached to the fire signs, the assertive Aries, dazzling Leo, and enthusiastic Sagittarius.

Grails are about emotions: feeling, relationships, the unconscious, intuition, relationships, feelings, and psychic awareness. This suit is associated with the element of water, and like water, can be tranquil and dreamy or stormy and chaotic. Astrologically, Grails are linked to the water signs, nourishing Cancer, deep and purifying Scorpio, and intuitive Pisces.

Knives symbolise thought: mental activity, the intellect, rational thinking, and decision making. Varying from peace and understanding to mental conflict, struggle, and intellectual pursuit, much of the unrest in our lives can be attributed to our thoughts. Astrologically, Knives are connected to the air signs: Libra's balance and adjustment; the diversity, dreams, and hopes of Aquarius; and Gemini's intellectual awakening.

Skulls are associated with matter: the physical, structure, craft, work, money, the home, and the physical body. This can range from good business, management, comfort, and security to stubbornness, obstacles, and physical hardships. Pentacles are associated with the earth element and the earth astrological signs: Capricorn's prowess and cunning, Taurus' proficiency and love of home, and Virgo's skill and fruitfulness.

The 22 **Major Arcana** can be associated with a fifth element, spirit, the upper point of a pentagram which oversees, influences, and controls the flow of the other four elements. Each Major Arcana card is, in essence, a divine energy or vibration, a spirit largely outside of our understanding, possessing its specific Universe, each an aspect of the supreme reality. These cards represent great principles, concepts, and spiritual perceptions which characterize powerful, long-term energy or big events in our lives, as well as spiritual forces at work. These tend to be exalted archetypal allegories acting as a mirror to reflect hidden aspects of our awareness. These cards actualize the higher parts of our consciousness and have been linked to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the paths of the Tree of Life, the Runes, the I-Ching, and the archetypes proposed by Carl Jung. Major Arcana cards also represent our personal journey in life, starting with the questing beginnings of the Fool and completing the circle with the World, eternally rebirthing.

Suit Cards

The suit cards, numbered 2 through 10, express different forms of their associated element, each number emerging from the previous into greater material manifestation, as illustrated on the Tree of Life (see page 28), until all the qualities from each number settle into material form in the Tens. The climax of the elements represented in the Tens sets into motion the rebirth of a new cycle, returning again to the Aces and starting again with the Twos. Each of the numbers actualizes the element in a specific way, exerting different qualities and attributes upon them, as listed here:

Ace: Essence, beginnings, unity, creation, gifts, willpower; the Crown

2: Energy, polarity, balance, harmony, cooperation, choices, wisdom

3: Growth, synthesis, nature, expression, abundance, creativity, understanding

4: Structure, order, stability, organization, work, measurement, mercy

5: Force, activity, change, progress, conflict, adjustment, courage, strength

6: Equilibrium, reconciliation, fullness, centred, truth, wholeness, peace, beauty

7: Absorption, passivity, reflection, spiritualization, illusions, integration, victory

8: Rhythm, communication, cycles, giving, receiving, enchantment, splendour

9: Crystallization, unconscious, invisible structure, transition, foundation

10: Manifestation, transformation, completion, endings, beginnings; the Kingdom

So each numbered Minor card combines its elemental suit quality with its numerical meaning, giving us a good idea of the cards indication. For example, the Two of Grails can signify harmony and duality in the area of emotions, or represent polarity of intuitions or the cooperation of our unconscious, depending on the question and the other cards revealed in the spread.

The Minor cards are further understood when we also incorporate their astrological aspects. As we have seen, 12 of the Major Arcana cards are Zodiacal Trumps, representing the 12 astrological star signs, comprised of cardinal, fixed, and mutable signs for each of the elements. In the Minor Arcana Twos, Threes, and Fours express the cardinal qualities, being the element in its most direct and dynamic form. The fixed signs are embodied in the Fives, Sixes, and Sevens, expressing in a steadfast, stable, and resolved form. The Eights, Nines, and Tens convey the elements in an unstable and changeable yet adaptable form.

Aries (The Emperor)	Cardinal Fire	2, 3, and 4 of Scepters
Taurus (The Hierophant)	Fixed Earth	5, 6, and 7 of Skulls
Gemini (The Lovers)	Mutable Air	8, 9, and 10 of Knives
Cancer (The Chariot)	Cardinal Water	2, 3, and 4 of Grails
Leo (Strength)	Fixed Fire	5, 6, and 7 of Scepters
Virgo (The Hermit)	Mutable Earth	8, 9, and 10 of Skulls
Libra (Justice)	Cardinal Air	2, 3, and 4 of Knives
Scorpio (Death)	Fixed Water	5, 6, and 7 of Grails
Sagittarius (Temperance)	Mutable Fire	8, 9, and 10 of Scepters
Capricorn (The Devil)	Cardinal Earth	2, 3, and 4 of Skulls
Aquarius (The Star)	Fixed Air	5, 6, and 7 of Knives
Pisces (The Moon)	Mutable Water	8, 9, and 10 of Grails

Each of the numbered cards is also influenced by one of the seven planets, which are assigned to them in the repeating cycle of Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, and Jupiter. Therefore, Two of Scepters represents Mars in Aries, Three of Scepters is Sun in Aries, and Four of Scepters is Venus in Aries, respectively. The Five of Skulls then represents Mercury in Taurus. These attributes are included in the description of each Minor card.

Court Cards

The 16 Court cards often represent particular people or personalities in our lives, and can be viewed as personality types. As well as indicators of a particular astrological characteristic determined by our birth date (see Kith & Kin), the Court Cards have also been identified with the 16 personality types as defined in Jungian psychology. They can be thought of as different archetypal characters in story and myth, or as personalities such as the dreamer, the warrior, the lover, the trickster, the loner, the scientist, etc.

The elements represented by the four suits are further divided into sub-elements in the Court Cards. The Lords being fire, Queens being water, Princes being air, and Daughters being earth. Here we see how we arrive at 16 sub-elements depicted in the 16 Court Cards—the element of each suit having aspects of all four elements. The Queen of Skulls, for example, represents the watery aspect of earth, while the Lord of Knives represents the fiery aspect of air.

As personality types, the Court cards can depict people in our lives, as well as aspects of ourselves. The Lord of Skulls for example may represent a creative but down-to-earth person, a figure in our lives who helps us maintain stability and encourages us to be more productive. Or the card can identify a time in our lives where we feel or need those qualities within ourselves. The Court card can embody a message, experience, or situation related to the reading or can correspond to an expression or quality within ourselves. When

a Court Card appears in a reading it signifies that its characteristics or qualities are related to the situation or question asked. This may mean that the type of energy described is present in the situation or that we should employ the energy ourselves. If in a shadow aspect, it means that these energies are conflicting with us, that we lack the energies described, or that the shadow qualities are related to the issue or situation.

The **Lords** represent the fiery, active, bold, and dynamic aspect of their element. They are the original, most sublime energy of their element, being both forceful and transient. In the process of creation, whether in terms of universal natural laws or that of any act of material creation, the Lords are the spirit, the first spark of conception or inspiration. Lords represent the creative urge—choosing the seeds to plant. They characterize a person of great self-confidence or creative dynamic.

As the **Queens** embody the watery element of their suit, they are concerned with the emotions. They are the complements of the Lords, being receptive to the original active energy of their Lord. The Queen gives grounding to the seed of the Lord's idea, fermenting and transmitting it, as the second process in the act of materialization. They are passive, receptive, unconscious, reflective, and nurturing, related to our feelings and our inner dream world. Queens represent taking the first step—planting the seeds.

The **Princes** constitute the third level of creation, and, like the air suit of Knives, they stand for intellect and conscious thought. They are the active combined energies of their Lord and Queen, manifesting as a more constructed, intellectual form of their union. Princes express the quality of their particular suit with extravagant motion. They are swift, creative, willful, intelligent, inspiring, and constructive. As a symbol of the new life ignited from the union of fire and water, they contain the thought structures and workings which activate and structure material forms. The Prince also

symbolises our "higher self," which longs for union and integration with the our earthly existence (represented by the Daughters). Princes represent our plans taking shape—plants sprout and grow.

The **Daughters** represent the earthy aspect of their suit. As the final stage in creation, they are the material form of everything we see around us, and our physical being, encompassing all three of the energies of the previous levels. They exemplify the completion and materialization of the original energy conceived by their Lord. The Daughter is a counterbalance to the original seed (the Lord), giving form and substance to his transient spiritual nature. Ultimately she re-absorbs the source energy as potency for rebirth, allowing the cycle of transformation and growth to continue. The Daughter is a reflection of the silence of her Queen, but in solid form. Hearing the call of her Prince, she longs and hungers for him, illustrating how, from our earthly existence, we seek union with our spiritual, higher self. She is resourceful, down-to-earth, and industrious, while displaying the richness, beauty, and playfulness of nature. Daughters represent the final form—harvesting what we've sown.

USING KABALA & TAROT

The major symbol in the Kabala, a system of Jewish mysticism, is the Tree of Life. It is perceived of as a map to the Universe—its secret workings, mechanics, and the processes and interaction of its spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical energies. As such, it is a system that can be applied to bring insights and deeper understanding of the Universe, spiritual forces, nature, other people, ourselves, and the essence of things. It describes how the Universe came into being and illustrates a path to God and spiritual enlightenment. In Jewish and Christian mythology, this tree stands at the centre of both the Heavenly and Earthly Edens, while many other world mythologies describe a similar Tree of Life whose role is very

similar. The Norse cosmic World Ash, Yggdrasil, has its roots in the Underworld while its branches support the abode of the gods. The Egyptian's Holy Sycamore stood on the threshold of life and death, connecting the worlds. It is the Bodhi Tree of the Buddha, and is named Yaxche by the Mayas, whose branches support the heavens.

The first to link the Tarot with the Kabala was Eliphas Levi, a nineteenth-century occultist, specifically linking the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet with the 22 Major Arcana cards. Succeeding Tarot devotees expanded upon the idea, including A. E. Waite and Aleister Crowley. The Tree of Life consists of four worlds, each of which corresponds to one of the four Hebrew letters in the symbol for the name of God, IHVH. These worlds, or levels of being, and their Court Cards are as follows:

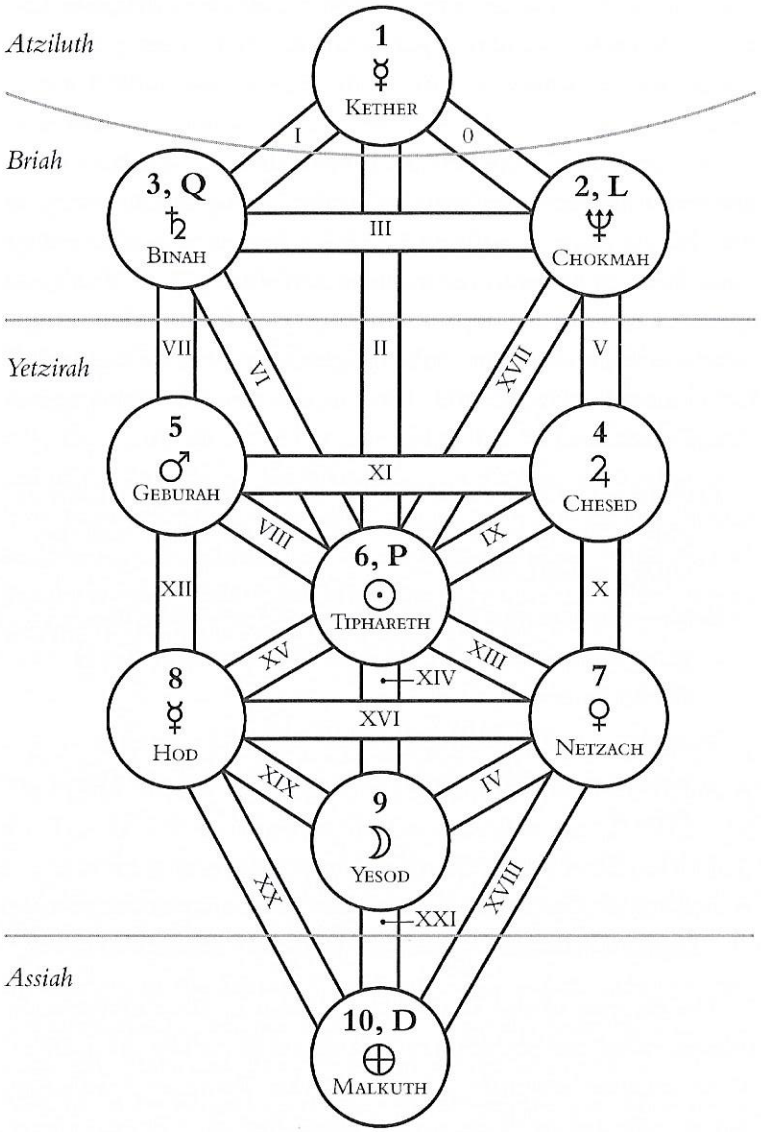
Atziluth—The Archetypal World—The world of pure spirit or pure ideas. All other worlds originate here. Element of fire; letter I (Yod); Lords.

Briah—The Creative World—The world where the idea is given form or a pattern. Element of water; first letter H (Heh); Queens.

Yetzirah—The Formative World—The world where the pattern is given expression. Element of air; letter V (Vau); Princes.

Assiah—The Material World—The world where the idea is given physical form. It also contains the unseen energies of matter. Element of earth; second letter H (Heh); Daughters.

The diagram of the Tree of Life consists of 10 interconnected spheres, called the Sephiroth, which depict 10 archetypal qualities. These qualities originate from the Divine Being, or Everlasting, and are reflected in all the natural world, including human nature, following the idea that we are created in the image of God. These



Tree of Life

spheres are connected by 22 paths. Each sphere and path has different characteristics and meanings, forming the basis of how life is created and of our place within the Universe. Study and contemplation of the Tree of Life diagram helps in understanding both the workings of the Universe and the mechanics of the Tarot.

Much like modern science, the Kabala asserts that life comes from a tiny point within the centre of nothingness and is represented by the Sephira at the top of the Tree, Kether—divine energy. The next two Sephira are Chokmah, the primordial masculine energy, and Binah, where the feminine energy meets the male energy. These male and female energies form the basis of all creation, thus beginning the process of life which travels through all the other spheres. After uniting in Tiphareth, their combined energy creates design of a new birth which eventually accumulates into physical manifestation in Malkuth, the physical Universe. Thus the diagram represents the descent of the Everlasting into the manifest world.

The Paths

The Paths that link the different qualities of the Sephiroth are the cards of the Major Arcana. They are the secret laws of creation, forces and cycles expressing how life naturally develops. These Paths reveal how we can move from one type of energy (one Sephira) to another. They are the binding and reflective laws of the energies they connect. If you are in a situation you wish to change, you can choose a path that will take you from one energy to another. If, for example, you are feeling great strife and conflict in a situation or relationship (Geburah) and want the situation to be consolidated, fairly resolved, or you want to retain your authority (Chesed), then we would look to the Strength card for inspiration. You would reflect on the meanings and imagery of the Strength card and tap into the particular power the card shows. Alternatively we may be feeling things are too dense and solid (Chesed) in our situation and

desire to break free into a new "creative energy" (Geburah), which is possible by balancing and utilizing the power of the Strength card, but here we focus on the energy of the panther reaching forward. The two different directions illustrate how the Major cards show types of power in harmony.

The more we focus on the vibrant feeling that the power evokes in us, the more our life and feelings will follow our desire. As we develop more understanding of the dynamics represented in the cards, we can get a clearer idea of how they speak to us in a reading. We may be dealt the Hermit card for example, which is the pathway between Chesed (condensation and materialization) and Tiphareth (our individual truth, beauty, and a reflection of the Everlasting), teaching that a period of solitary reflection and silence brings a structured form of ideas into our divine perception in perfect equilibrium, or vice versa.

On the Tree of Life diagram the Roman numerals show which Major Arcana card relates to which pathway. Some systems order the cards slightly differently, so if you already use another ordering, employ whichever feels right for you, as the Tarot works through our unique personal insight and creativity.

0	The Fool	XI	Strength
I	The Magician	XII	The Hanged Man
II	The Priestess	XIII	Death
III	The Empress	XIV	Temperance
IV	The Emperor	XV	The Devil
V	The Hierophant	XVI	The Tower
VI	The Lovers	XVII	The Star
VII	The Chariot	XVIII	The Moon
VIII	Justice	XIX	The Sun
IX	The Hermit	XX	Judgement
X	Fortune	XXI	The World

The Sephiroth

While the 22 paths represent the Major Arcana cards of the Tarot, the 10 Sephiroth represent the numbered cards and the positions of the Court Cards. The Aces belong in Kether, the Twos in Chokmah, the Threes in Binah, and so forth, until we reach Malkuth, the position of the Minor Arcana Tens. Each Sephiroth is represented by a planet, and each has its own unique type of energy that can further reveal the meanings of the cards, as well as indicate different emanations of the Everlasting that can be tapped into and used for our benefit. These "spheres of being" are also connected to the chakra points in meditation and yoga, as well as spiritual realms that can be explored in visualization, creativity, and dreamwork.

Kether: The Crown. Pluto. Aces. Kether is our connection to the Everlasting, the source of all life. It dissolves all boundaries that are keeping us from the Divine and enables us to experience profound healing and inner peace. It symbolises that point beyond which our comprehension about the origins of being cannot go any further; it is considered to be an infinite nothingness out of which the first "thing" exploded to create a Universe of multiple things. In Hebrew, *Kether* means "Crown"—it is the Crown of the Tree of Life. From Kether emanate Chokmah and Binah, and all three together constitute the Logoic Triangle of the Tree of Life, which is also known as the Holy Trinity in Christianity. Kether is the centre of gravity of the Logoic Triangle, and is also the highest sephiroth of the Pillar of Equilibrium, which includes Tiphareth, Yesod, and Malkuth. Kether is the deepest part of our Inner Being. He is often referred to as the First Logos, the Ancient of the Days, the Venerable Elder, and the Father who resides in secret. He is infinitely merciful, and carries absolute wisdom. In the world of Kether, neither individuality, personality, nor any type of superior or inferior "I" exist. (Although referred to as "He", it is important to note that the Elder of Days is androgynous.)

Chokmah: Wisdom. Neptune. Lords and Twos. Chokmah is divine wisdom, the spark of revelation, inspiration, and insight that can radically change our world in an instant. Chokmah is our expansive, creative energy, always thinking of new possibilities and new horizons. It is considered to be a stage at which the infinitely hot and contracted singularity expanded forth into space and time. It is often thought of as pure dynamic energy of an infinite intensity forever propelled forth at a speed faster than light. It is considered to be the primordial masculine energy.

Binah: Understanding. Saturn. Queens and Threes. Binah is divine understanding, the ability to see the universal laws at work in the world and in our own life. Binah understands the workings of fate and how all events are woven together in a vast cosmic plan. It is thought of as the primordial feminine energy, the Supernal Mother of the Universe which receives the energy of Chokmah, cooling and nourishing it into the multitudinous forms present throughout the whole cosmos.

Chesed: Mercy. Jupiter. Fours. Chesed is our ability to love and show mercy and compassion. It is an active, powerful force leading us to our passion and heart's true desire. The first three Sephiroth, called the Supernal Sephiroth, are considered to be the primordial energies of the Universe, existing on a plane of divine energy. After Binah the Universe gets down to the business of building the materials it will need to fulfill its evolution and creating new combinations of those materials until is so dense that, by the stage of Malkuth, the initial pure limitless energy has solidified into the physical Universe.

Geburah: Severity. Mars. Fives. Geburah is the justice and discipline carried out by the authority within us. This is the energy we use to set boundaries and protect our truth. Geburah focuses our energies and harnesses our Will. The force of our expansion often causes conflict, leading to revolution.

Tiphareth: Beauty. Sun. Princes and Sixes. Tiphareth is our true Self that can harmonize and integrate the personality into a working whole. It is our radiant, shining core, concerned with our individual truth and self-expression. As the central point of the Tree of Life, it represents making sense of our life experiences. When stable and permanent contact is made, the centre integrates all our diverse experiences, emotions, revelations, and dreams into a meaningful whole. With this powerful harmonizing and equalizing focus, the soul can develop, flourish, and find its purpose in life.

Netzach: Victory. Venus. Sevens. Netzach represents our instinctive and intuitive responses to life; attractions and repulsions that naturally draw us towards or away from people and situations; our longings, passions, and emotions and how they are reflected and absorbed in the world and in people around us. As the soul ignites it dances back and forth, experiencing sorrow and joy, depression and ecstasy, constriction and expansion.

Hod: Splendour. Mercury. Eights. Hod is our communication system, our ability to receive information, process, analyze, and make appropriate connections. It facilitates intuition. Hod corresponds to our ability to abstract, conceptualise, and reason. This level of consciousness arises from the fact that in order to survive we have evolved a nervous system capable of building internal representations of the world. Active synthesis of abstract forms in consciousness.

Yesod: The Foundation. Moon. Nines. Yesod represents the foundation of the psyche, concerned with safety, comfort, and survival needs. Yesod knows exactly what we want and need in order to feel secure in life. It is the place of crystallization and foundation, and is the hidden infrastructure whereby the emanations from the rest of the Tree are transmitted to Malkuth. Yesod represents the substance which lies behind, supports, and gives shape to reality. It lies behind physical matter and holds it together, something less structured, more elastic and refined.

Malkuth: The Kingdom. Earth. Daughters and Tens. Malkuth represents our body, all of nature's physical manifestation. Here we consciously connect with nature and feel grounded and embodied in the present. The word Malkuth means "Kingdom," and this Sephira is the culmination of a process of emanation whereby the creative power of the Everlasting is progressively structured and defined as it moves down the Tree and arrives in a completed form in Malkuth. It is the sphere of matter, substance, the real, physical world. After the energy of creation has condensed into matter, it is thought to reverse its course back up the Tree until it is once again united with its true divine nature.

ALCHEMY & KINDRED SPIRITS

Where a planet rules a card, it means the card embodies that planet's nature and powers. When a planet is exalted in a particular card, it means that planet's energies aid and support the card.

The Kindred Spirits represent divine beings and spirits which can connect us with the energy of a card. They encompass the whole spectrum of energies that make up the essence of all things. The word *Tarot* means a "wheel," and within this wheel all these energies have their place, revolving in order for the Universe to exist. This cycle of essences presents itself eternally in our Universe, in the turning seasons, the passing of eons, the movement of the planets, and in our own being. They are both beyond us and deeply within us. The Major Arcana symbolise these energies within the cycle, while the Minor Arcana represent those energies on a more personal, human level. Traditionally they were viewed as Angels or Messengers, but can also be viewed as vibrations or frequencies. They are beyond us, just as the movements of the planets are beyond us, yet affect us at a deep level because they are also part of our makeup. None of them are good or evil, they are merely types

of energies. What we normally regard as intuition or a mood is often a connection with these cosmic frequencies. We naturally pick up on these frequencies and react to them.

The Kindred Spirits need to be engaged with on an emotional level in order for us to utilize them for our benefit. These spirits are part of us; only by recognizing, respecting, and engaging with them—with those aspects of ourself—can we harness their power. The names of the Kindred Spirits given here are from the Golden Dawn tradition.

THE AWAKENING

Card Spreads & Exercises

I dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dreamers,
And I become the other dreamers.

—WALT WHITMAN, "THE SLEEPERS"

THE TAROT SPEAKS TO US in the language of soul imagery. By this I mean that the messages speak directly to our inner self rather than through our rational conscious analysis. Tarot speaks a language that is very similar to unconscious dreaming, which communicates through feelings rather than intellect. The reason for this is that the archetypal imagery speaks to us personally from deep within us, from a place that is buried beneath our day-to-day conscious awareness. Becoming aware of these feelings, images, and archetypes is something that happens with practice and by becoming more aware of such feelings in our everyday lives. In essence they are messages from our unconscious and, as with reading a story, the message is different for each person. Indeed, you may read the same story several times and experience different feelings each time. The imagery of the Tarot works in a similar way, where our unique personal perspective is what is important, as this allows the unconscious to reveal personal messages for us.

The Tarot connects an individual to his or her unconscious spiritual self, allowing us to examine a situation from a deeper, wider perspective than is usually possible using our rational mind. The cards

represent universal human constants, and as such, each of us can relate to every card. They stimulate our unconscious, bringing to mind ideas, situations, people, problems, and solutions that we might not have considered, or might have left hidden. By bringing these things to light, we are able to consider them consciously and thoughtfully, thereby giving ourselves a complete picture of the situation at hand.

It seems that our unconscious is adept at working with the quality of time, naturally bringing us into synchronicity with our true place in creation. It allows things to unfold at the correct moment, as a natural instinct in harmony with our unique life force and journey. It is an inner voice in service to the glorification of our unique spirit, following the natural flow of the Universe. Our conscious self tends to perceive time as a linear quantity, allowing us to form a structured sense of the world around us and our place in it. This rational view can help us in organizing and deciphering the language of the unconscious, which is less confined by time and space. The unconscious speaks to us through images, symbols, allegory, and metaphor. When our conscious mind is calm or when we are sleeping, our unconscious voice is easier to hear, whether through dreams, intuition, or feelings. When will still our conscious reasoning and look to the realm of the creative, we see more clearly the essence of things and how they interact. Rather than making a distinction between the mystical and the scientific, we can view them as different levels of nature.

This integrated view of the world helps us to understand how the Tarot may work. Instead of thinking of it as drawing random cards purely by chance and that all events happen for no particular reason, we can choose to see that the events leading up to the present moment could involve a greater quintessence than we realize. What if our inner and outer experience are bound together? The Tarot is a mirror that reflects back to us the hidden aspects of our own unique awareness. Our reasoning mind can then organize

what the unconscious reveals by making sense of the symbols and meanings of a spread of cards, putting them into terms we can understand, and using them to enhance our life's quest.

We do not need to understand how the Tarot works to use the cards, whether we are scientifically or mystically inclined. The most important thing is that we believe that the cards speak to us on a personal level through our unique feelings and creativity. It is also important to still our mind and slow our heart rate through relaxation before reading the cards. We should take the reading seriously and focus on the moment, with a calm reverence and willingness to believe that the cards are drawn for a reason. Whether you believe that the cards are truly random or are chosen based on mystical influences is unimportant. For the period of the reading, only faith in the process is important.

SHADOW & LIGHT ASPECTS

Each card has a shadow aspect and a light aspect. Sometimes the cards indicate that the darker aspects need to be controlled and balanced in us; sometimes the cards tell us that these aspects should be embraced more, or they should be employed to overcome an imbalance or an adversary. At the same time a positive position of a card could be a sign that we need to engage more with those aspects, seek out the light that can be gained from a situation, or that we are indulging too much in this seemingly positive energy. As you practice with the cards, these observations will become more and more intuitive, especially when you learn to relate meanings in a spread of a number of cards, their interaction with each other and their position in the spread. A good example of the positive and negative qualities in a card is the Devil. The card embodies the essence of exhilaration, a lust for life, and an intoxicating joy. However, if this is out of balance with our other qualities or is taken

to extremes, it can be become an egocentric, devouring, and self-indulgent addiction. The card could be a warning against these extremes or that we are in danger of extremes. But it may be that we need to be more egocentric or passionate about something, self-indulgent even. Perhaps we need to be more frivolous or hedonistic, or perhaps we need to employ these energies to defeat an obstacle or adversary. The light element of the Devil may be encouraging us to engage more in a lust for life, to allow feelings of self-worth and passion to burst forth within us.

The paintings of *The Tarot of Vampyres* contain both the positive and negative element of the card, so the message contained in a reading depends on the question asked, the situation, and the other cards in the reading. Personally I do not use reversed cards when reading, but rather allow the cards to guide me as to their specific message in regard to the question or situation at hand. Particular types of card spreads can include card placements that represent negative influences in a situation; in this case it is good to explore the shadow aspects in the card meanings. Some Tarot readers prefer to randomly reverse some of the cards while shuffling. Use whatever system works best for you.

READING TIPS & GUIDELINES

- Always relax and spend time creating a feeling of well-being before a reading. Be open-minded and positive.
- You can ask anything, but decide what you want to ask and do so in a way that gets to the heart of the situation, simply but clearly. Ask for insight into a situation, rather than for a yes or no answer. Repeating the question out loud, in your mind, or in writing may be helpful.

- Shuffle and deal the cards while calmly focusing on your question.
- Deal all the cards in the spread face down, then turn them over one by one in the order of their positions. You can begin interpreting the cards as you turn them, or after all are turned over.
- Use your creative instinct to get an overall picture of the spread and any narratives you see. Check for any recurring suits, Court Cards, symbols, numbers, and colours.
- Major Arcana cards reveal special cosmic influences at play; Minor Arcana cards show more personal fluctuations.
- Relate each card meaning to its position in the spread. Try following the narrative of a theme featured in the spread—an animal, an object, or how the blood flows in the cards. Relate to the feelings and actions of the figures and look for any correspondences and themes in the images.
- Check for any cards symbolising you or the person you are reading for. Perhaps their Sun sign card is featured (see Kith & Kin).
- Read some of the card explanations and correspondences and any previous notes you've made about certain cards to get a fuller picture of the card's meaning in this spread.
- Once you've gathered all your thoughts, remind yourself of the specific question asked and summarize the answer in simple terms.
- Write down the cards and your interpretation for future reference.

SPREADS

Here is a selection of card spreads devised for *Phantasmagoria*. Choose one that you feel will best suit the question you are asking. You can use any other style of card spreads that you know or discover, and can even devise some of your own, though you should write a clear account of what the different card positions represent before shuffling and dealing the cards.

Soothsayer

This spread is good to get a new perspective of a situation. After shuffling, deal a single card. Focus all your insight and attention on the meaning and symbolism of this card. Explore how the card reveals answers to your question, and study its explanation in detail. Over the next week, write down anything that relates to it in your daily life or study, events, images, thoughts, or feelings. Employ some of the exercises in the following section to get a deeper understanding of the card's relevance to your question.

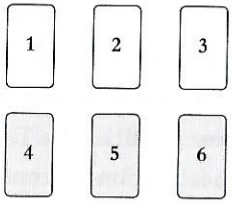
Dark Mirror

The Dark Mirror reveals doorways and obstacles. Card 1 represents positive influences relating to the question, a doorway that can be opened; read all the positive aspects of this card only. Card 2, dealt to the right of Card 1, shows an obstacle that relates to the question; read the shadow aspect of this card and try to see how this key will open the doorway.

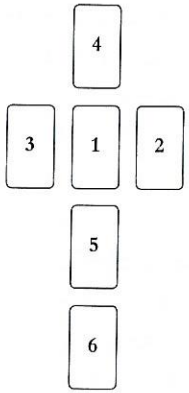
Blood Trail

This three-card reading reveals the past, present, and future influences on any situation. Card 1 shows the past events or feelings relating the question. Card 2 represents the present circumstance, with clues to resolving or explaining it. Card 3 shows the way the situation is

Blood Trail



Book of Shadows



Elemental Cross

heading, should things remain on the current course. It should be noted that the future here is not a transportation to a future date but the direction in which the situation or issue is flowing. Any changes we make, especially those relating to the other cards in the spread, will the alter the flow. Look especially at the narrative across the three cards and how they are linked. How is the lifeblood changing? We may be presented with a deeper understanding of how an issue developed, the reason for a present situation to bring about a positive future or a difficult lesson we need to learn.

Book of Shadows

This reading helps us discover difficulties underpinning any issues. First we must determine three aspects associated with the question that we want to explore. This could be its past, present, and future; its effect on the mind, body, and soul; or its effect on our emotions, actions, and Will. Once you have determined the three subjects you are to work with, begin by dealing the cards face down in sequence. Cards 1 through 3 should be read as the positive aspects of

their given subjects, while the cards beneath them are the difficulties involved or the lessons to be learnt, and should be read in their shadow aspects.

The Elemental Cross

This spread gives a detailed account of all the forces at play within a particular situation or issue. The cards are dealt in order, face down. Turn each card over in the order you laid them and interpret each card in relation to its position as follows: Card 1—the basic issues around the question, an overview of the questioner's concerns, the situation in its essence. Card 2—the fire element, the questioner's energy in the situation and the effects or foundation of that willpower. Card 3—the water element, signifying the emotions associated with the question or topic. Card 4—the resulting combination of the previous cards, and how the question affects our spirit and self-identity; as a symbol of the air element, it relates to the thought processes and intellectual aspects of the situation. Card 5—the earth element, presenting us with the physical reality, how the question affects our everyday life, and the result of the previous cards; it can also point to obstacles that may be holding us back. Card 6—the element of spirit, the secret key to unlocking the treasure contained in the cross.

Trespass

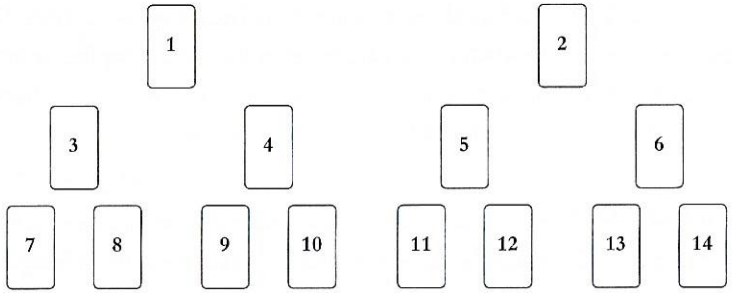
For this reading start by looking at the card images and choose one that relates to your question or topic. Alternatively pick one of your personal cards (see Kith & Kin) or just one you'd like to explore. Lay this card face up in front of you. Shuffle and deal six cards to the right of your chosen card. Starting with your chosen card, make up a short story or narrative from the image on the card. You can do this either in your mind or in writing as you do the reading. Turn over each card in sequence, adding to your story as you go, until you reach the last card, which should contain the conclusion to your story. If you have been writing you'll be able to read this as a complete story and seek out messages relating to your question or topic. Its good to re-read this again a few days later with a fresh perspective.

Forbidden Fruit

The Tree of Life is the basis of this spread and gives a deep insight into our personal energy channels at a particular time, or in a certain situation. This reading reveals the secret workings of our various spiritual aspects, and special attention should be given to any Major Arcana cards that appear. It can give an extensive understanding of forces at work, either as a general reading about ourselves or regarding a topic or issue. Shuffle the cards well. Lay ten cards face down in the positions of the 10 Sephiroth on the Tree of Life diagram (see page 28). Turn and interpret each card in the order it appears on the Tree, starting with Kether and ending with Malkuth. By relating the meanings of the cards to the descriptions of the Sephiroth accompanying the Tree of Life diagram, we can build a complex picture of our spiritual currents at a given time.

The Prophecy

The Prophecy allows us to look into the future within a year's span. You can use it as a general guide for personal insight or to ask about a specific subject, event, or topic. Create a circle of twelve facedown cards. Counting clockwise from the topmost card, which signifies January, find the card that represents the current month and turn it over. This reveals something in your present circumstances, to which the reading relates. From here you can peer into the future by counting clockwise through the months to a specific time. Only six cards should be overturned in total. Those face down at the end of the reading must be shuffled back into the deck without being looked at.



Labyrinth

The Labyrinth

The Labyrinth unveils the outcome of different paths we can take in a particular situation. For this spread you will use fourteen cards, dealt face down in sequence. Start the reading by turning over the two cards on the top level. These represent two different paths you could take relating to your question. Take some time to think about the meaning of these cards and how they relate to your question. Decide which path you would like to explore, and turn over the two cards beneath the chosen top level card. Here you have two more options, each revealing a possible result of the above action. Select which of these two cards you want to investigate, and turn over the pair of cards beneath it to discover the two outcomes of your chosen path. You may also return to the first card level and select a different path to see how alternative actions change the outcome of a situation.

EXERCISES

To further enhance your understanding and personal interactions with the cards, you can try some of these creative exercises. These work best when you are exploring your own unique creative landscape while relaxed and having fun.

The Manuscript

Much like the Trespass spread, this exercise involves creating a short story to further explore the message in a particular spread. Follow the instructions for the Trespass spread, but use the cards you have overturned in your reading. You can use the images for inspiration by including characters, plots, moods, and settings. How much you write for each card is up to you; it can be a couple of lines or a starting point or episode in a whole chapter. Reading the story over will unlock gateways to more secrets about your spread.

The Dreaming

This exercise looks to our dreams for inspiration. Before you are ready for sleep, place the cards from your reading next to your bed. Alternatively, you can choose a single card or set of cards for this exercise. Next create a relaxing mood: candles, incense, a relaxing bath, soothing music... use any means to help you relax into a calm dreamy state of mind. Take some time to study the card images and think about your interpretation of the cards. Blow out any candles with a wish and prepare for sleep. Lie comfortably while breathing softly and steadily to lull yourself into a feeling of tranquility as you drift into sleep. When you wake in the morning write down any dreams you remember in as much detail as you can—these may present deep insights from your unconscious about the cards you're working with. This technique takes practice, and the dream may appear any time within a week. Repeating the exercise enhances the effects.

The Vision

Choose what you feel is the key card in a spread; this is often the first or last card laid, but could be any of them. Start by placing the card on its own on a table and creating a relaxing mood, as with the Dreaming exercise. Sit or lie comfortably and breathe slowly and deeply until you feel peaceful. Hold the card and gaze into the picture for five to ten minutes Observe the figures, shapes, and colours without dwelling on intellectual understanding or meaning. Engage with the mood of the card in a restful, almost dreamy way, while staying focused and absorbed in the card. Next, lie or sit comfortably with your eyes closed and continue to visualize the card image in your mind's eye. Use your imagination to step into the card; wander around and explore the landscape and objects. If your mind wanders, just lightly bring it back to where you were and relax. Engage with the figures, ask questions that have been on your mind, listen for answers, and observe feelings. Wander deeper into the vision, beyond what is shown in the card, into the landscape and the realms of your imagination. Explore any pathways, buildings, or doorways. Open hidden caskets—what is inside? This exercise can also be used to draw on some of the energy from the card. After 20 or 30 minutes, gradually return to the edges of the card, ask for the understanding or energy you seek, and step out of the card. Lie silently for a minute or two before opening your eyes and ending the exercise. Make notes about the exercise in your journal.

The Shroud

You can also employ traditional techniques such as chakra work, yoga, and meditation to unlock the powers of any of the cards. The Shroud works best with a single card. After relaxing body and mind as described above, focus on the card you wish to engage with for five to ten minutes, then sit or lie comfortably and empty your conscious thoughts as much as possible. You can learn more about

techniques such as yoga and opening the chakras to draw the particular energy of the card into the area of your chosen energy field. Emptying your mind of conscious thought through meditation is a great way to open up channels for the current and impulse of a card to reach you. This effect can be enhanced by imagining a beautiful, warm golden light surrounding your body while in meditation, or by changing the colour of this light to the colours in the card itself, you attract the qualities and energies of the card more directly. After the exercise make a note in your journal of any sensations, perceptions, or images that you experienced.

Darkspell

When you have finished a reading, you can also create verses or poems for each card in the reading, which will produce an in-depth and creative interpretation direct from your own imagination. Other artistic talents could also be used in a similar way, from drawing, sculpture, or craft to dance or music. Once you have your poems or verses finished, you can make notes on how they relate to the cards and possibly use them for future readings.

KITH & KIN

Personal Card Portraits

IN THE WORLD OF *PHANTASMAGORIA*, we all possess every element (represented by the cards) within the wheel of the Tarot. But depending on our time and place of birth, each of us is in closer harmony with certain elements.

The characters and fables of this burlesque are illustrated on the cards, drawn from Vampyre myths. The Vampyre myths illustrate the possession, exchange, and drawing in of different types of energy, or lifeblood. These phantoms are the weird and wonderful messengers guiding us along our quest. Those you are most like are special devotees of your quest. Each element is equal in value, each essential, and by their very nature, each affects and reflects the other elements. If you can get an inkling of your unique combination of elements—your own personal makeup—you will better understand your place in your quest and in the world.

Here you can create a personal portrait in *Phantasmagoria*. You can use this portrait to see if special cards come up in a reading and how those cards interact. If you are reading for someone else, make a note of their Sun sign and related cards. You can also look more closely at the messages held within these cards, and use them in some of your spreads and creative exercises. Have fun!

THE PORTRAIT

To begin your personal journey in *Phantasmagoria* you will need the 78 cards, a journal, a pen or pencil, and your astrological Sun sign. If you also know your Moon and Rising signs, these can be used to determine further personal characteristics represented by the cards. Your Moon and Rising signs can be found by having a birth or natal chart run. These can be obtained free from various websites, which will calculate your chart from inputting details of your date, time, and place of birth. Alternatively, you may want to calculate your own chart using one of the many astrology books available, or you may wish to consult a professional astrologer. Once you have your birth chart and have discovered your portrait cards, you can begin to understand what they mean to you and to observe how they interact with other cards.

The Calling

Create a personal Vampyre name. This helps establish a personality which will be specific to your journey while playing with the cards. It acts as a focal point when exploring and working with them. Your Vampyre name will also give you a mythic persona with which you can explore *Phantasmagoria*. These insights can then be employed to help and guide you in everyday life. The name can be an anagram of your actual name, a name that means something specific to you, or one from your imagination. Write your Vampyre name at the top of a new page in your journal. Beneath this you can list the following traits to build up the character from your own astrological make up.

Dynasty Card

As we have seen, the word *Tarot* refers to a wheel. This wheel incorporates every type of energy or vibration that exists in the Universe—energies that are represented by the 78 cards, in essence,

forming a map of the invisible landscape that shapes existence. The 22 cards of the Major Arcana represent energies that work on a universal scale—original archetypes after which other, similar things are patterned. They can be viewed as representations of the Everlasting or as symbols of primal forces that are the foundation of all creation, from star clusters and atomic particles to human and animal physiology and psychology. Our Dynasty card shows which major universal influence is predominant in our life, and is the card that represents our astrological Sun sign. The card will be represented by one of the 22 images of the Major Arcana, and as such is an archetypal symbol of a particular cosmic energy which reveals the unraveling journey of your life, your drive, and major influences. Your Dynasty card is determined by your Sun sign, often called your star sign, and refers to the sign which the Sun was in at your birth. It presents a generalized description of your true personality. It is your principal motivation, your preoccupation, and your life force. Often this cosmic influence is beyond our direct control, and also refers to our specific spiritual energy. To find your Dynasty card consult the chart at the end of this section—your star sign and Dynasty card can be found beside your date of birth.

Vampyre Clan

The chart will also reveal which of the four Vampyre Clans you belong to. These are symbolised by the four elements and represented by the four suits of the Minor Arcana. These four elements symbolise the building blocks of creation, which are mixed together in various combinations to create the limitless diversity of all of creation. The four elements are bound together by a fifth element called spirit, which is absolute possibility and infinite potential (most clearly symbolised by the Fool). Although unmixed with any element itself, this fifth element holds all the others together while at the same time maintaining that they keep their individuality. Your Clan card is the

Ace of the element that rules your Sun sign and it reveals which of the basic four elements you have most affinity with. The clans are also signified by an element, an animal totem, and particular qualities, as outlined below. For a more in-depth analysis, refer to the descriptions given for the Aces. Each of the four Clans have three different Orders (listed below)—select one from your Clan that appeals to you personally and write that Order on your profile. The Order will not directly affect your readings but is a tool to help you engage with and have fun with the cards.

Clan of the Scepter. Fire. Ace of Scepters. Panther. Energetic and creative in nature, with great strength and power. Orders of Warriors, Magicians, and Alchemists.

Vampyres of this Clan are adventurous, inspired, generous, and are known as Masters of Magic. They possess great willpower and enthusiasm, with bursts of bright energy. Innovative and direct. They can sometimes seem intense, impractical, or impatient.

Clan of the Grail. Water. Ace of Grails. Serpent. Emotional and seductive by nature, with great insight and psychic ability. Orders of Lovers, Dreamers, and Illusionists.

Vampyres of this Clan are imaginative, compassionate, and sensitive. They are known as Keepers of Secrets. They weave the realms of dreams and fantasies. Empathic and reflective. They can sometimes seem elusive, oversensitive, or possessive.

Clan of the Knife. Air. Ace of Knives. Crow. Intellectual and thoughtful, with great perception and clarity of mind. Orders of Counselors, Seers, and Mystics.

Vampyres of this Clan are good strategists and communicators. They are known as Oracles of Visions. They are masters of enchantment and cunning. Clever and lucid. They can sometimes seem uncommitted, flighty, or critical.

Clan of the Skull. Earth. Ace of Skulls. Wolf. Steadfast and efficient, with great wisdom, magic earth energy, and solid endurance. Orders of Witches, Teachers, and Necromancers.

Vampyres of this Clan are practical and determined with tremendous skills of consolidation. They are known as Shapers of Worlds, and are masters of innovation and craft. Reliable and sensual. They can sometimes seem too practical, stubborn, or avaricious.

Bloodline Card

This attribute is our personal numbered Minor Arcana card. While our Dynasty card is our cosmic influence, our Bloodline card depicts the challenges and the quest of our life. Studying this card will unlock messages about your personal journey. Check your date of birth against the Bloodline list on the chart at the end of this section to discover this card.

Your card or others of the cards may appear spooky, but every card contains an exceptional beauty. We should see each card as a unique and wonderful magical power. We should look at different perceptions in our personal cards. A good way to get some insights into a particular card is to write down keywords about their number meaning (see Alchemy) and their suit or Clan. For the Five of Scepters we might write: Dynamic (Five), Creativity (Scepters), or Active Magic.

A card may be portraying the reflection of its gifts or skills—the archway through which we pass to activate the gift. We should read the parts of the card explanation that speak about the most positive powers. When studying the treasures within any card, you should read the shadow aspects as powers you possess to use for your personal growth towards happiness. You could write these powers in your journal and develop them into magic spells. As all of life is in constant motion, the cards are generally about transformation from one state to another, and their light and dark polarities are reflections

of each other; without one, the other does not appear—when balanced, they reveal the card's hidden treasure.

Ancestry Card

Our Ancestry card gives us a concept of where we have come from—the origin of our personal spiritual journey. This card is the one that precedes your Bloodline card in the sequence of the Minor Arcana cards: 2–10 of Scepters, 2–10 of Grails, 2–10 of Knives, 2–10 of Skulls.

For example, if your Bloodline card is the Five of Scepters, your Ancestry card is the Four of Scepters. If your Bloodline card is the Two of Knives your Ancestry card is the Ten of Grails.

Descendency Card

Your Descendency card reveals what follows in your journey. Rather than showing our past, present, and future, the Ancestry, Bloodline, and Descendency cards indicate the motion of your personal journey. The transition exhibited by these three cards reveals drive, tendencies, and purpose. This card is the one that follows your Bloodline card in the sequence of the Minor Arcana cards, as shown above.

If your Bloodline card is the Two of Grails, your Descendency card is the Three of Grails. If your Bloodline card is the Ten of Skulls, your Descendency card is the Two of Scepters.

Vampyre Court

This is the Vampyre Court to which we belong. It is an image of our personality and character, the type of person we are. This card will be one of the 16 Court cards. To find your Court card, find your birth date in the Profile Chart. Write your Vampyre Court on your profile, for example: The Court of The Queen of Skulls. As the Daughters contain all the elemental qualities of the other Court Cards in their suit, they do not have a court of their own.

Other Cards

If you know under which sign of the Zodiac your Moon falls, you can look it up in the chart just as you did for your Sun sign. To find this card use the Astrological degrees column to find your Moon Dynasty (Major Arcana) and Moon Bloodline (Minor Arcana) cards. Our Moon cards show the predominant cosmic influence on our *emotions*, in contrast to our Dynasty card, which is our ego (Sun) and spiritual energy as well as our self-realization. The Moon cards can speak to us about how we are emotionally, our inner self, our dreamscapes, and our unconscious feelings.

If you also know your Rising sign, sometimes called your Ascendant sign, you can look it up in the chart just as you did for your Moon cards. Your Rising card indicates how you relate to the external world, how others see you, your projected personality, how you express yourself, and often your personal spiritual calling. It can also be a picture of your guardian angel. If you know which astrological signs other of your planets are in, you can see how the area that the planet represents expresses itself in your personality. The areas each planets represents can be found in the descriptions of the 10 Sephiroth earlier in this book. If, for example, our planet Mercury is in 21–30 degrees Cancer, then our ability to communicate, receive information, and weave connections is shown in the Major Arcana card of Cancer (the Chariot), and in the Minor Arcana card the Four of Grails.

Birth Date	*Astrological Aspect*	*Dynasty Card*	*Bloodline Card*	*Vampyre Court*	*Vampyre Clan*
Dec 31–Jan 9	11–20° ♑	The Devil	Three of Sk	Q of Sk	The Skull
Jan 10–19	21–30° ♑	The Devil	Four of Sk	P of Kn	The Skull
Jan 20–29	0–10° ♒	The Star	Five of Kn	P of Kn	The Knife
Jan 30–Feb 8	11–20° ♒	The Star	Six of Kn	P of Kn	The Knife
Feb 9–18	21–30° ♒	The Star	Seven of Kn	L of Gr	The Knife
Feb 19–29	0–10° ♓	The Moon	Eight of Gr	L of Gr	The Grail
Mar 1–10	11–20° ♓	The Moon	Nine of Gr	L of Gr	The Grail
Mar 11–20	21–30° ♓	The Moon	Ten of Gr	Q of Sc	The Grail
Mar 21–30	0–10° ♈	The Emperor	Two of Sc	Q of Sc	The Scepter
Mar 31–Apr 10	11–20° ♈	The Emperor	Three of Sc	Q of Sc	The Scepter
Apr 11–20	21–30° ♈	The Emperor	Four of Sc	P of Sk	The Scepter
Apr 21–30	0–10° ♉	The Hierophant	Five of Sk	P of Sk	The Skull
May 1–10	11–20° ♉	The Hierophant	Six of Sk	P of Sk	The Skull
May 11–20	21–30° ♉	The Hierophant	Seven of Sk	L of Kn	The Skull
May 21–31	0–10° ♊	The Lovers	Eight of Kn	L of Kn	The Knife
Jun 1–10	11–20° ♊	The Lovers	Nine of Kn	L of Kn	The Knife
Jun 11–20	21–30° ♊	The Lovers	Ten of Kn	Q of Gr	The Knife
Jun 21–Jul 1	0–10° ♋	The Chariot	Two of Gr	Q of Gr	The Grail
Jul 2–11	11–20° ♋	The Chariot	Three of Gr	Q of Gr	The Grail
Jul 12–21	21–30° ♋	The Chariot	Four of Gr	P of Sc	The Grail
Jul 22–Aug 1	0–10° ♌	Strength	Five of Sc	P of Sc	The Scepter
Aug 2–11	11–20° ♌	Strength	Six of Sc	P of Sc	The Scepter
Aug 12–22	21–30° ♌	Strength	Seven of Sc	L of Sk	The Scepter
Aug 23–Sep 1	0–10° ♍	The Hermit	Eight of Sk	L of Sk	The Skull
Sep 2–11	11–20° ♍	The Hermit	Nine of Sk	L of Sk	The Skull
Sep 12–22	21–30° ♍	The Hermit	Ten of Sk	Q of Kn	The Skull
Sep 23–Oct 2	0–10° ♎	Justice	Two of Kn	Q of Kn	The Knife
Oct 3–12	11–20° ♎	Justice	Three of Kn	Q of Kn	The Knife
Oct 13–22	21–30° ♎	Justice	Four of Kn	P of Gr	The Knife
Oct 23–Nov 1	0–10° ♏	Death	Five of Gr	P of Gr	The Grail
Nov 2–11	11–20° ♏	Death	Six of Gr	P of Gr	The Grail
Nov 12–22	21–30° ♏	Death	Seven of Gr	L of Sc	The Grail
Nov 23–Dec 2	0–10° ♐	Temperance	Eight of Sc	L of Sc	The Scepter
Dec 3–12	11–20° ♐	Temperance	Nine of Sc	L of Sc	The Scepter
Dec 13–20	21–30° ♐	Temperance	Ten of Sc	Q of Sk	The Scepter
Dec 21–30	0–10° ♑	The Devil	Two of Sk	Q of Sk	The Skull

PART II

THE CARDS

The Oracle of the Gods is the Child-Voice of Love
in Thine own Soul; hear thou it.
Heed not the Siren-Voice of Sense,
or the Phantom-Voice of Reason:
rest in Simplicity, and listen to the Silence.

—Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Thoth*

MAJOR ARCANA

THE FOOL

Alchemy: The Trump card of Air; Connects Kether with Chokmah on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Spirit of the Everlasting

Essence

The original creative seed. Cosmic consciousness and spiritual intuition. Great potential and openness, creativity, freedom, and independence. New beginnings, fresh vision, or great changes. Chaos. The Great Spirit. Infinite possibility and potential. Inspiration, joy, and ecstasy. Curiosity, confidence, faith, and courage.

Message

The Fool is the bearer of the deepest creative powers. Like the burst of spring in the year cycle, he is the start of a new beginning or rebirthing. He contains within himself all the elements of each of the other cards, and so is unique, being both a reflection and a prerequisite of each card. He encompasses each of the elements that make up existence. This makes him the creator god of *Phantasmagoria*, the dreamer who dreams up all the other dreamers. On a personal level, this card therefore signifies a renewal in any or all of our human domains. Our creative, emotional, intellectual, or physical condition is transforming towards new horizons. It may imply

messages will soon present themselves or the start of a new personal worldview, a new relationship, or new business transaction. Great leaps of faith lead to great potential for change. Like moonbeams suddenly bursting forth from behind dark clouds, we now have the inexorable energy and courage to make our desire a reality. This card tells us that a new period of life is emerging from the clouds of the unconscious into realization. The Fool is not only the beginning but also contains the completion of the matter simultaneously. Other cards surrounding this one will decipher this wholeness as it relates to your question. In spiritual matters, the Fool means idea, thought, spirituality, and that which endeavors to transcend Earth.

The spiritual vision expressed by the Fool sees both the beginning and the ending of the new cycle. It is the seed which contains the substance of the whole unfolding within itself. This vision of the completed event is the inspiration, unyielding belief, and drive that make the transformation possible. It is the moment when we suddenly realize that something is not only possible but absolutely beyond doubt, as though a veil has been lifted and we finally see the whole picture. We often have these moments when in a deep tranquil state—where everything seems wonderful and serene, in perfect harmony with our well-being, to such an extent that we become almost detached from our mind and body, like we are floating on air. This can be while absorbed in a beautiful landscape or emotion, or as a mystical experience. It can occur when we are lost in our own musing, daydreaming, or just watching the rain or resting in a summer garden—everything seems magical and we drift into a feeling of warm dreaminess. We also can experience this "out-of-body" phenomenon whilst engaged in a creative pursuit, lost in the moment, or invigorated by a challenge. It is the same feeling of absolute joy and oneness with spirit that is experienced through sexual orgasm. All these sensations reflect the mood and energy of the Fool card.

In readings, he signals a reawakening or change of direction that will lead us to new enterprise and ventures. This card also tells us to keep faith and trust our natural responses, knowing that they will steer us towards new wonders and growth. If we are facing a decision or feeling doubts, the Fool teaches us to believe in ourselves and follow our heart, however ambitious, fanciful, or peculiar our desire may seem. When the Fool appears we must realize our unlimited potential in the situation and engage with the spontaneity of the moment. He represents complete faith that life is good and worthy of our confidence. While he may be thought of as too innocent, his innocence sustains him and brings him boundless, vibrant joy.

The Fool can be telling us that a new and unfamiliar element relating to our question is at hand. Perhaps that the situation is uncertain or irregular, or that a bizarre turn of events is about to take place, urging us to let go and freefall, trusting that our higher self and the Everlasting will guide us through. The main purpose of this card is to drive us forward beyond our imagined limits or understanding into new growth. To make the impossible, possible. To take the leap of faith, even if it may seem foolish. In this sense the Fool card displays pure innocence—pure faith in our own potential and that our deeper spiritual source will work for our ultimate glorification. When the Fool appears in your reading, you can rest assured that something extraordinary and wonderful is about to happen related to your query.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Fool card is the beginning of a new cycle in the wheel of the Tarot. He is the first emergence of the seed, and also the essence of everything to be unfolded from the seed. As the first card, the Fool contains all of the other cards within himself. He is nothing and everything at the same time, balanced perfectly between the

positive and the negative. Being completely empty means that he is also infinite possibility. This makes the Fool unpredictable and full of surprises. He is full to the brim with creative vitality, intoxicated by his own exhilaration, and he represents feelings of pure joy and orgasmic rapture. He bursts from the tomb, vibrant with the creative lifeblood blazing through his veins. In one hand he raises to the heavens the Holy Grail smoldering with rich lifeblood. This blood, or creative energy, is the combination of fire and water, ignited in flaming passion. The blood contains both the lust of the fire and the love of the water, our willpower and emotions united. This conception gives birth to the Fool, who is the elemental trump of air.

Within myth and tradition, the Fool is symbolised by the god Pan, the All-Begetter, who is drunk with passion. He is the enraptured zest for life and the fuel that drives life forward. He is related to the god Dionysus and the gods of spring. Within Celtic folklore, Pan is the Green Man and the Spirit of Nature, ever-ecstatic and eternally new. This aspect reveals his innocent, almost reckless nature, much like the mischievous Puck and the half-gods of the forest—companions of the Maenad women of Faerie lore. He is the Divine Child, the new Sun—related to Mabon of Celtic tradition—but at the same time the First Logos and the ancestor of all the gods. He is also identified by the classical god Bacchus, whose ecstatic dance is more magical than mystical—surrounded by various companions, all insane with enthusiasm, displaying a madness that is indicative of his nature as the god of intoxication.

In his right hand, the Fool offers a white rose with fresh lifeblood spilling from its centre. This symbolises the unfolding of new beginnings, and the first taste of something emerging out of nothing, brought about by the binding of lust and love. The Fool is perfectly balanced in the equilibrium of the natural flow of life. His creativity is effortless, inspired, and innocent. He is the vein through which the "fire-water" flows. The crows, which symbolise the air

cards (Knives), represent his airy nature, their sight fixed on new horizons. As the "Resplendent Dragon" and the "Great Wind," the Fool can be both terrifying and beautiful. He can be both pure and cunning, childlike and childish, innocent and deadly. As the centre of the Tarot wheel, he can be anything he pleases, or nothing at all. Much like the "dark matter" mentioned in the introduction, he is the empty space on which anything can be projected. He is the magic lantern from which the theatre of life is cast—the master of illusion. At the base of the tomb we see four animal masks, which express the four elements, whose natures our Fool can draw into himself as he wills, mixing and combining the elements to his design, since he is also the trickster and the weaver of shadows. The Fool card represents any original, subtle, or sudden impulse, usually arriving from a completely strange or unexpected direction.

Shadow

As the Fool is nothing at all, he does not have a shadow in the same sense as the other cards. He casts no shadow—being both the light source and all the potential shadows himself. He can even transform cards around him from shadow into light or vice versa. If you are employing the system of reversed cards or if the Fool appears in a shadow position of your reading, it often indicates that you are not using the skills of the Fool to your best advantage in the situation. Also, it may be that you, the person you are reading for, or another person indicated in the question is displaying aspects of the Fool that are extreme or out of balance. These aspects can manifest as constant daydreaming, folly, taking exaggerated risks, or being foolhardy. Unfettered zeal, chaos, intoxication, extreme idealism, eccentricity, or even mania can also be indicated here. On the other end of the spectrum, a reversed Fool card could indicate an agnostic and dull materialistic attitude to life, imprisoned in the banal cravings of the masses.

THE MAGICIAN

Alchemy: Planetary Trump of Mercury; The Sphere of the Zodiac; Connects Kether with Binah on the Tree of Life
Kindred Spirits: The Magus of Power

Essence

The Spiritual Father and positive masculine energy. Action and activity. Creative power and skills. Wisdom. Adroitness, ambition, and cunning. The power of influence. Communication. The Ego. Willpower and drive. Balance and flexibility. Ingenious. Bold and vital energy. Spiritual intensity. Shaping our destiny to our desires.

Message

The Magician is poised between the conscious and the unconscious—he is the shaper and creator of reality. This position gives him the power to dip into the yet-unformed unconscious world and subtly weave threads to influence its becoming. When the Magician appears, it means that we must tap into our creative vitality, whether to control a situation or create a new one, in order to conceive or develop something that we desire. He teaches us that we now have absolute power to change things according to our Will. It may be a new venture or a desire that we want fulfilled. We must intensify our positive thoughts and expand our belief that anything we desire is possible—using dedication, creative ingenuity, and intense ambition to make what is possible into a reality. Like the Magician, we should use our personal genius to merge with the fluid substance that transmits activity into actuality.

We must examine the known or hidden situation with a singleness of purpose. The Magician reminds us that the primal forces of creativity are ours if we claim our power and act with insight and deliberation. He is a sign to act with strength and brilliance, committed to

getting what we desire. He can indicate a strong attraction or intense fascination related to our question, or be a signal that the time is now right for us to execute our Will. By immersing ourselves in the Magician's powers we become a lightning rod, attracting what we desire and in turn shaping the world around us to bring about this desire. Rather than a forceful intellectualizing, it is a carefree "matter of fact" belief that is the secret to this card. Just as we know that blood is red, knowing (rather than hoping) that we will receive what we desire is the key, because we are the centre and origin of our own reality. We must therefore be bold and reach out for what we desire, with absolute belief in our own creative power.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Magician harnesses spiritual energy, which then radiates from and around him. He symbolises the initial act of Will, from which all things are created. He is the spark in the seed of the Fool, and he creates his desired outcome through determined action. He represents the power to harness universal forces and use them for our own objectives. The Magician's art is genius, representing our unique creative spirit, which we can employ to shape the world to our wishes. In the painting we see him mastering the four elemental objects. The blazing scepter contains the active power of the Will and of spiritual creativity, while he holds in his other hand the grail of blood—a symbol of the unconscious, the vessel into which he mixes fire and water. This lifeblood is then poured (channeled) into the wheel of the Tarot—the Sphere of the Zodiac—depicted by the large basin. He plants the fire-seed of his desire in the realm of the subtle, unformed spiritual matter. The knife, a symbol of thought and conception, is planted into the skull—which itself is symbolic of the manifested physical form or earthly events. By balancing and utilizing these four natural laws, his genius creates magic and miracles. These

four elements are the four powers that the Magician skillfully uses as tools to give himself power and superiority over his fate.

The Magician combines and balances this alchemy in order to implement his Will, whether to aid himself or others. The candle is both the original spirit and the combined forces binding the elements together into his design. As the archetype of the active, masculine principle, the Magician channels supreme dynamic intent. He is the Cosmic Father, whose energy is spiritual willpower—his power is more in the spirit realm than the Emperor, who represents a more earthly willpower. Our Magician is not afraid to act. He believes in his genius and knows what he intends to do and why. The Magician's efforts are enacted with single-minded fortitude and boldness, because he recognizes the divine source of his power. While the Fool represents the seed coming into being, that seed is still empty of intent, as it is pure potential; with the Magician, the seed is ignited. He understands the dark matter around him and uses his craft to shape the energies and solidify them, thereby manifesting the Everlasting into concrete time and space.

Shadow

The shadow of the Magician can present itself as a lack of willpower, feelings of defeat, or giving up our power to another person or to a situation. Perhaps we are not using our skills and talents to the best of our ability or we need to learn new ones in order to overcome the situation we are asking about. We may be holding on to emotions of helplessness or lacking in self-belief and energy. Once we understand these obstacles, we can start reshaping our reality. Another shadow cast by this card warns us that we may be forcing our Will on another person or on a situation when, in fact, a time of waiting or self-sacrifice is the best path to take. Other card positions in the reading will give us clues as to what this alternate path may be. It may be that someone is imposing their Will on us and we are

being advised to counteract this through our own creative magic powers. Another shadow aspect of the Magician can simply be that we are *hoping* when we must learn to *believe*—this skill takes practice to master, but we must realize that whatever we unquestionably believe to be true, becomes the truth. Often we interrupt this natural process by obscuring our vision with intellectual or emotional rationalizing.

THE PRIESTESS

Alchemy: Planetary Trump of the Moon; Connects Kether with Tiphareth on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Priestess of the Silver Star

Essence

The Spiritual Mother and receptive feminine energy. Inaction and inactivity. Intuitional powers. Pure, exalted, and graceful. Inner equilibrium. Reflection and perception. Feelings, calm, patience. Healing and love. Dreams and the imagination. The Inner Source. The Divine Vessel. Seduction and illusion. The unconscious.

Message

The Vampyre Priestess is telling us that we must use our intuition and seek guidance from within. In the context of the question, she advises that we must become aware of a larger reality. In readings, this card suggest that our challenge is to look deeper—beyond the obvious, surface situation to what is hidden or ambiguous. She inspires us to recognize the magnitude of our potential and to remember the unlimited possibilities within ourselves. The Priestess is telling us to access our intuitive powers, to develop them and listen to our inner silence. Often she indicates that a period of waiting and passivity is needed in the situation that we are asking about. It is not

always necessary to act to accomplish our ambitions; often they can be realized through a stillness that allows the seed of desire time to blossom.

She may be teaching us to understand that our feelings are rooted in the realms of the unconscious, which is working on our behalf, gently weaving our desired patterns into the veil of the Everlasting. Perhaps we need to be more in touch with, and trusting of, our intuitive abilities. This card can also indicate that a secret is soon to be disclosed to you, and that you should be aware of this, looking out for signs in symbols, events, chance occurrences, or even dreams. She can also denote an experience of extra-sensory perception and can aid us in developing an occult talent. Through meditation, find a place of quiet stillness in order to engage with the presence of subtle psychic and spiritual messages relating to the question.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Priestess teaches us to trust in and listen to our intuition. She is the mysterious and the unknown. She is the subtle essence of our unconscious, gently telling us to listen to our quiet inner voice for guidance. She possesses a deep understanding of things and employs us to be patient and heed the voice of our instinctive feelings. She reveals secrets and answers to us through our dreams and imagination. She is the Cosmic Mother, represented by the Moon—which makes her the aspect that unites the human and the Divine. She is the bond between the archetypal and the formative realms. In the painting she is depicted with a bow, which reveals that she is connected not only with the Moon goddesses of mythology but with the huntress goddess, and that her arrows are her enchantments. The Priestess is inactive, passive energy—the equal-opposite and complement to the Magician. She also represents our thirst for reunion with the Everlasting, and her joy is in the sating of that thirst.

The Priestess symbolises the hidden secrets of the initiation of life and the aura of feminine mysteries. She is the keeper of the unconscious and sits before the thin veil of unawareness which is all that separates us from our inner landscape. The Priestess is the veil of light that hides all things in mystery, until the time is right for them to be revealed—containing within herself the secrets of these realms. This aspect relates her also to the virgin goddess portrayed in many mythologies. She is as pure and all-encompassing as the Moon—accepting all forms and possibilities of life, which she nurtures within herself until they crystallize and take form. This veil embodies the subtle designs of our feelings, which are interwoven into the structure of our thoughts. The infinite forms are illustrated in her glimmering dress, like the river of life, eternally giving birth to new creations. Our Vampyre Priestess has a book suspended over her lap as if floating in the fluid of creation. This is the Book of the Tarot, and the blank pages onto which the Will of the Magician is to be written. A drop of blood is seeping from the book, symbolising the fire seed about to ignite into one of its multiple possibilities. Her crown represents the phases of the Moon, illustrating that the mysteries of life are eternally hidden and can only be glimpsed by holding an attitude of acceptance and grace, patiently awaiting the time when a secret is revealed to us. She is enthroned in our unconscious and our dreamscapes—at the gateway between dream and reality, where intuition and feelings crystallize into waking reality. The Priestess embodies not only our own inner realms but the collective unconscious of all life with its inherited symbolism and spirits. She radiates an acceptance of all life with clarity and harmony. The Priestess balances the energy of the Magician, reflecting it and giving it foundation, thereby illuminating our path towards the joy and the spiritual fulfillment of the Fool. The crystals of light that form in her silent womb become the earthly richness that is unfolded in the next card, the Empress.

Shadow

As the Priestess is closely associated with the shadow and the parts of us hidden from normal awareness, she can sometimes be an indication that we must face our fears in order to heal or develop. Her gentle nature allows us to face and accept our shadow side in a safe environment. She gives us the foundation of her dark enchantments, which, while mysterious and daunting, are woven with a poetic purity of light that brings a calm acceptance. This allows us to let go of our fears and incorporate them into ourselves as a whole. These emotions then become part of our rich tapestry, giving us greater understanding and self-confidence, and they can be used to help achieve our goals or to heal ourselves and others. If this card is reversed or in a shadow position in a reading, it may also be a symbol of illusion—perhaps we are living too much in our daydreams and need to focus on the situation at hand. It may be that we are becoming too reclusive or hiding from the responsibilities related to the question or topic. The Priestess, when in a negative aspect, also warns us of repressed feelings that need to be acknowledged and healed, either in ourselves or another. She also speaks of hidden enemies or secret plans being made against us—encouraging us to impede them—or can indicate that seduction is at play. Often, the shadow of the Priestess is simply a message that we must take a step back from a situation and allow things to settle before engaging in any activity surrounding it.

THE EMPRESS

Alchemy: Planetary Trump of Venus; Connects Chokmah with Binah on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Daughter of the Mighty Ones

Essence

The Earthly Mother. Venus. Unimaginable love. Motherhood, beauty, creativity. Emotions. Harmony. Luxury. Good fortune and success. Elegance. Mother Nature. Vibrant health and sensuality. Potency. Acceptance and merging. Abundance. Relating to animals, trees, and plants. Harmonizing with the natural rhythms.

Message

The Empress is the warm, soft, and sensual unfolding of nature. She is the earthly aspect of the heavenly virgin Priestess, the nature of motherhood and the boundless power of nature in bringing forth new life. When she appears in your reading, she is telling you that a period of gentle fusion and affection is needed in order for a new birth to develop. While the Priestess is concerned with spiritual matters, the Empress often denotes the physical realm. She is the gateway from which new life and creativity is born, and like nature, her character is one of tender love for all forms of life. Imagine relaxing in a vivid summer garden, surrounded by warm light, vegetation, flowers, birdsong, and the hum of insects, feeling in harmony with the delicate flow of peaceful activity. That is the spirit of the Empress; her lightness and love pervade all life and her gentle devotion nourishes and cultivates everything in its passive unfolding. As Venus she is the love and source of all life, encompassing the whole cycle of life, becoming, transforming, and returning with natural pace, serenity, and acceptance. As the daughter of the Priestess, she

is the foundation of spiritual love made physically manifest through devotion and tender fostering.

Her answer to the question you ask is to find a place of calm acceptance where we can hear the subtle harmonizing impulses and to submit to the natural flow of life so that new wonders may develop. She can also signify that something new and beautiful is soon to manifest. This can be a new addition to the family, an artistic project about to be realized, or the beginnings of a new love relationship. It could be an invigorating self-assurance relating to work or perhaps a new home. While her nature is one of gentleness, the Empress also has an active role—her possessive nature is evident in her devotion, whether in love, work, or creativity, often stirring feelings of great excitement. Sometimes her message is the arrival of a new child.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Empress of *Phantasmagoria* is the love between the Magician and the Priestess. She combines the two and is the flow that brings them together. The Empress is the planetary trump of Venus, the goddess of love. She is the creative beauty in nature that blossoms and delights, unfolding its treasures softly, like a warm summer breeze. She is love itself. The previous three cards are of a deeply spiritual substance, mostly beyond our normal perception and understanding. The Empress gives shape to the combined qualities of the previous cards. She can be seen all around us in the wonder and beauty of nature, created with the symbiosis of life. The card represents Mother Earth, who unfurls the "fire-seeds" with delight and elegance—lovingly creating and then adoring her creations. She is a symbol of the protection, nurturing, and affection between animal families and the spectacular enchantments and wonders of nature. The Empress may seem dichotomous because she contains both inactive and active energy, but her active energy is purely receptive and is the subtle substance crystallizing from the designs of

the deeper spiritual realm of the previous three cards. The nature of the card can be seen as similar to the love a mother has for her newborn child.

The Empress is the love that sustains and nurtures life. We are not only surrounded by this love-filled life but are made up of the same substance. When we hide within our fear, we constrict the flow of life into us; by letting go of control and allowing things to unfold naturally, we immerse ourselves in the playful river of life, feeling at one with our natural home, happy and peaceful in the delights of our earthly existence.

In her hand, the Empress holds a pink rose (representing Venus and receptive love) seeping with potent lifeblood. The rose also represents the forms of nature and the beauty of love. Behind the Empress we see an apple tree, symbolising the fullness and fertility of life, the delicious fruits ripe with potency. As the Great Mother, the Empress symbolises the Womb of Life from which all life forms emerge and are adored. Her black dress reminds us that she is the whole of nature's cycle—both day and night, beginnings and dissolutions—yet all are beloved and cherished, because all are necessary and true. This eternal transforming and unfolding of the diverse bounty and beauties in nature and creativity is represented by her peacock collar. The bee is a reference to traditional Tarot imagery, denoting ardor and virtue and a connection to honey as the richness and pleasures of the senses.

Shadow

In her shadow aspect, the Empress can indicate that we are acting without empathy, we have lost faith or harmony with the peaceful and vibrant qualities she possesses. In such cases we should take time to calm our spirit and realign ourselves with the gentle flow of nature and enjoy simple pleasures. Taking time alone engaging with the beauty of nature will help to bring us back to the warmth

of the Empress. She soothes us, allowing us to let go of frustrations and rediscover the beauty around and within us. When this card is in a shadow position, it may be that we are being made aware that there is an element of inflexibility or selfishness present in the situation, either within ourselves or in another. Her shadow is illustrated in the archetypical wicked stepmother, displaying characteristics of envy, indolence, malice, or indulgence. The meaning relates directly to the query, so this may not be a specific person but an indication that a particular negative quality is evident in the situation. The Empress in her shadow form can also represent feelings overwhelmed by emotions.

THE EMPEROR

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Aries; Mars Rules, Sun Exalted; Connects Netzach with Yesod on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: Sun of the Morning; Chief Among the Mighty

Essence

The Earthly Father. Mars. Vigorous Energy. Fatherhood. Leadership, strength, ambition, and confidence. Passion and originality. Rulership. Justice and order. Stability and structure. Great perception, objectivity, and rationality. Courage, wisdom, and power. The Emperor can also indicate conquest, command, or domination.

Message

As the consort of the Empress, the Emperor possesses qualities opposite of hers. This does not mean they are in conflict, but that they give balance and understanding of themselves to each other. The full positive powers of the Empress and Emperor are realized when each is perfectly balanced within themselves. You may be feeling lost or overwhelmed by emotions (a shadow of the Empress) and you must engage the skills of the Emperor to bring your emotions to a place of harmony. When he appears it is often a sign that you should be more forthright and look at a situation less emotionally. He can indicate that you must take a firm stand, set your boundaries, and take control of the situation. This not only applies in human relationships, but can also include inner conflicts. He is your fighting spirit and your personal fortress, your inner empire. It is time to pick yourself up and stand defiant, to draw magic energy from your spirit and overflow with confidence. The Emperor is a ruler and leader. He takes control of a situation, weighs the facts with a clear and focused mind, then takes action. This is not always fiery action; it is often about being precise and making intelligent plans, or setting boundaries and looking at things rationally. He can be telling you that now is the time to begin making plans, to start a new venture, or to spend time away from a situation and recharge your life force and self-assurance.

Another message of this card is that we must recognize a person in our lives who bestows these qualities upon us. Perhaps this is a supportive friend, father, or mentor figure we can turn to for guidance and instruction. He also sometimes indicate laws and matters of judgment or justice. In relationships he can indicate a grounded, loving, just partnership with someone who gives us the support of a firm foundation and confidence, or to whom we are a support or an inspiration. Like his title "Sun of the Morning," the Emperor grants us the gift to begin a new day, to start things fresh, and to engage in the excitement of making new plans.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Emperor establishes the potent creative power of the Magician in its most material form, giving it structure and authority. His other titles are "Chief among the Mighty" and "Sun of the Morning," revealing his power as solar and masculine in nature, contrasting with

the Empress' lunar female characteristics. As the archetypical father he is driven by a strong, practical paternal love—seeking to establish a firm foundation and secure a fortress for those he guards. His mighty skills in organization, coordination, and clear reasoning create a leadership of order, establishing a rulership characterized by stability, security, and liberation. He meets his challenges and responsibilities with great competence and conviction. He is inspiring, encouraging, and just.

The Emperor imparts a strong masculine influence that supports and balances the feminine. He denotes the inner image of the father, a figure of high authority who draws order and understanding from the unfathomable realm of the unconscious. The Emperor brings tangible structure to the transient and intangible. By classifying and correlating, he gives things meaning; without him, everything would dissipate back into elusive nothingness. He is ruled by the planet Mars, and is the trump card of Aries, which gives him intense willpower and fiery spiritual drive. He holds a ram-headed wand as his scepter, denoting his connection with the concentrated compulsion of the ram of Aries.

The red jewel in the ram skull is a symbol of the fire element—opposite to the reversed green jewel of his consort, the Empress. He grasps a white rose (spirit), encompassing and energizing it, in order to draw out and control the lifeblood created inside the rose. The red apples contrast with the green apples of the Empress, and illustrate the fruitful and ripening energy of the Sun. While the bee of his consort speaks of abundance and luxury (symbolised by honey), here the bee is about skills of social organization and frameworks of movement and defence.

Shadow

As with all the cards in their shadow aspect, a shadowed Emperor can indicate a lack of the positive qualities of the card. We should

now develop this part of ourselves through diligence and fortitude. By organizing thoughts and actions into systematic order, we will begin to see a clear path to what we desire. As the Emperor is largely about justice, his shadow side is injustice. Perhaps there is an element of injustice contained in the answer to your question, in something or someone in the situation or in yourself. The Major Arcana are archetypal images within each of us, and their shadows often embody those archetypes when those qualities are not yet reconciled within us. The negative aspects of the Emperor are the lack of its virtue—a lack of courage, responsibility, or independence. The shadow could also indicate domineering or tyrannical behaviour, self-righteousness, or selfishness. Other negative elements include stubbornness, impracticability, perfectionism, rashness, or ill temper. As with Mars, the Emperor is also associated with earthly power, conflict, war, and strict laws or regimes.

THE HIEROPHANT

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Taurus; Venus Rules, Moon Exalted;
Connects Chokmah with Chesed on the Tree of Life
Kindred Spirits: The Magus of the Eternal

Essence

The Teacher. Spiritual guide and advisor. Our Inner Holy Guide. Initiation. A Mentor or Master. Seeking inner truth. Shared and inherited knowledge. Established beliefs and traditions—education, culture, and spiritual laws. Religious authority, the establishment, organizations. Union of the human with the greater cosmos. Patience. Nurturing.

Message

The Hierophant is the intermediate between the earthly and the spiritual—the guide and guardian of arcane esoteric wisdom. When he materializes in a reading, it indicates that something is to be learnt or understood. This can relate to an important established principle, a matter of virtue, or the unveiling of a secret truth contained in adjoining cards. As a mediator between the Everlasting and humankind, the Hierophant often speaks of a need to devote oneself to the study and contemplation of something in order to gain a hidden meaning. As the trump card of Taurus, the Hierophant represents the earth element at its most balanced, where all the other elements have settled and been reconciled and understood. Therefore the Hierophant is an indication that a search for spiritual knowledge is needed to see the inner workings of the issue at hand. It may be that you are soon to meet a teacher or guide who will help you understand the situation. The guide may be someone already in your life, a text you may read, or sometimes a message that will come to you through a coincidence. It is time to return to your established belief system—your underlining principles—and have faith in your own personal truths. The card may be advising you to seek help from someone who has greater knowledge about the subject, perhaps a consultant, doctor, or instructor.

The card can also indicate that you should trust in your own interpretations with greater certainty of belief. The Hierophant can teach us to look for the deeper pattern, or the wider picture of a situation, beyond the surface details of things to more deep-seated concerns. Each card represents our own personal perspective of its qualities, and so the Hierophant can be a symbol of our own personal talent, knowledge, or genius, which we have developed over time and should now employ with full attention. Perhaps a work assignment is set before us. In this instance he teaches us to be focused and diligent in recognizing and developing our "true calling." In relationships he can imply that a phase of deeper trust and establishment of a more permanent partnership is developing. On an inner level, the Hierophant can indicate that we are now ready to teach and encourage others; we have an opportunity to guide and mentor another in our particular talent, to which we have now become a master through hard work and dedication. By passing on our knowledge, we gain great respect and a deep sense of worth.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Hierophant is the trump card of Taurus, which is the most harmonious of the earth signs. Represented in the Minor Cards by the 5, 6, and 7 of Skulls, its central theme is material success and establishing well-being. In turn, Taurus is ruled by Venus as the mother of life, containing the feminine potential of creation. The gradual but precise laws of nature unfolding its established principles and its beauty. Here we see the Vampyre girl as Venus, sitting attentively at the feet of the Ancient Teacher or the Ancient of Days. She has bitten into the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, symbolic of gaining secret understanding. Before her lies the indigo rose of the earth signs, as pictured on the Ace of Skulls. The Hierophant has reconciled all things into himself, the male and female, heaven and earth, and the past and future, giving him the power to understand and perfectly combine all parts in a structured whole. His throne of skulls relates to his ancient earthy nature and denotes an unbroken inherited link between him and his ancestry, knowledge passed down through generations. His horns are those of a bull, a symbol of the slow and heavy quality of his character. He is "old memory" and "archaic tradition"—illustrated by the webs covering his throne—while the wolf at his feet is the animal totem of the earth element, here symbolic of social traditions and family structures.

Another important meaning contained in this card is the concept of harmonizing our earthly existence with our divine origins. This is illustrated on the card with the five- and six-pointed stars. The Hierophant himself bears the six-pointed star—a symbol of the eternal balanced laws of the Universe, the Everlasting. He is God and the Universe—referred to as the macrocosm—and the source of all life. He is the Divine as the spiritual foundation of life. Held suspended from his hand is the five-pointed star, the pentagram, which is us in our unique earthly form. The pentagram is a symbol that unites the four elements bound by a fifth (spirit) and represents each unique form of life, including ourselves, as manifest on Earth—known as the microcosm. In our earthly being (microcosms) we are suspended from the Divine (macrocosm). Being made in the image of the Divine, we bear its essence in every atom of ourselves and have direct contact with its wonders and secrets on the spiritual plane. Therefore the Hierophant denotes a return to or gaining of greater understanding of the Divine—a reconciliation with God and a period of enlightenment where we recognize, and are glorified by, our true place and unique importance in the Universe. While the nature of the Hierophant is ancient and steadfast, his emotion towards us is one of immeasurable love and tenderness. We are the newborn wonders, the children of the Everlasting, who, like the Vampyre girl, sit attentive and respectful at the feet of our holy father. The ancient book he bears is a book of wisdom, law, or wonders, depending on the question asked of him. He represents our own divine image of our ego, and as such is also an allegory of our union with our personal guardian angel. We have encountered our guardian angel throughout life—often in a manner connected to our "true calling"—though perhaps have not yet realized it. The angel is your personal guide, teacher, and spiritual lover and is depicted in the Major and Minor Arcana cards of your astrological Rising sign (see Kith & Kin).

Shadow

This card, when in the shadows, means that we have not yet fully recognized our true value in the scheme of life. In a more negative aspect, this card can represent dogma, intolerance, stubbornness, or prejudice, whether in ourselves, in others, or in obstacles relating to our question. It can sometimes symbolise rigid thinking—being too set in our ways—and a call to learn the difficult lessons we are facing and, with humility and grace, to turn our attention to starting afresh with newfound understanding. Perhaps a time of trials lays ahead or we need to pay more attention to our guides and teachers. We should take time to examine ourselves and to move away from self-righteousness, arrogance, or a holier-than-thou attitude.

When in shadow, the Hierophant may be teaching us to fight against the establishment and break down worn-out structures, to break free of rigid regulations within our own thinking or in things outside of us.

THE LOVERS

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Gemini; Mercury Rules, Venus and Mars United; Connects Binah with Tiphareth on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Oracle of the Mighty Gods; The Children of the Voice

Essence

The Union of Opposites. Deepest love. Devotion. Establishing bonds. A marriage or a connection through mutual understanding. Attraction and passion. Sexuality. Duality. Physical attraction. Re-establishing lost unity and oneness—inner wholeness. Choices. Making a decision. Thoughtfulness and empathy.

Message

The enticing, possessive, and hungry kiss of a Vampyre is the essence of the Lovers. Like the blending of two drops of blood in water, dissipating in wisps, melting into one. The merging of opposites is the underlying theme of this card. It is most often speaking of a relationship in the questioner's life, or in the life of someone related to the question. The Lovers can indicate a wonderful renewal of a relationship. This can mean a relationship of love, romance, passion, or friendship. It can also indicate someone with whom you have a close love bond, perhaps a family member, or a work or creative partner, whether existing or soon to manifest. More generally, the Lovers can represent the attractive force that draws any two entities together in a relationship—people, ideas, events, movements, or groups.

The Lovers can represent an ideal partnership, and urge us to draw the blessings and life energy that such a partnership contains. Invigorating ourselves with the card's impulse brings about deeper joy and power. The card encourages us to allow ourselves to be lost in love, to give up ourselves and disperse the ego in order to embrace love's secret power. This not only applies to love relationships but also within our personal sphere. On an inner level, the Lovers represents a need to open ourselves to deeper spiritual understanding, to allow ourselves to be carried along with the flow and energy of the Everlasting. To submit, for a time, to the enticing kiss of the unknown and get lost in the ecstasy and wonder of life. This often brings us a feeling of oneness with the world and with the people around us, a warmth for strangers, and a loving connection with our environment. This process could be called symbiosis, and it is present throughout nature. Its fundamental quality is one of working as a whole unity.

When this card appears in a reading, it could also mean that two opposing forces need to be reconciled. This can relate to a relationship or apply on a personal level. There may be a split in duality or a

decision to be made. Making a clear choice or judgment, a decision point where we must choose between opposing choices and commit to that path are messages of this card. Often a decision must be made so that we know where we stand. The Lovers is about inner completeness, reconciling with our spiritual source, overcoming our fears, and loving ourselves.

This card can also express our personal sexuality. Sexual love is a way by which we can detach from our egocentric awareness, open up our being, and blend with that which is outside of us physically. It may be that we are soon to gain a wider perspective of reality—realizing that some of our own perceptions are merely a projection of what we expect. The Lovers can indicate that you have met, or soon will meet, with a person, project, or challenge that you will fall in love with. You will instinctively know that you desire this thing or person because of the excitement it inspires, even if that means veering from your current path.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Vampyre myth is steeped in sensual and sexual imagery and the eternal longing for sexual love and union. Most accounts of feeding, often through the drinking of blood, are depicted as very sexual and orgasmic, for Vampyre and victim alike. There is no denying that Vampyres are perhaps the most sensual and sexual of all monsters, but is this love or lust? In *Phantasmagoria* it is both: it is the lust of love, the desire to unite. It is being bewitched by someone or something that is so much a part of yourself, so perfectly attuned to you that you cannot, dare not, resist. The Lovers denotes a love, not only for another, but also from within—a union of mind, body, and spirit. The Lovers radiate the potent energy that is produced from the fusion of opposites. Most notably the male and female (yin and yang) energies. Here we see the powers of the Emperor and the Empress unified in a sacred oneness. This gives birth to the power of the

Lovers and sets into motion the materialization of the eternal, developing into continuous new life. These male (fire) and female (water) elements face each other as opposites because of their contrary natures. They are each the missing parts that the other possesses, and so are attracted to each other, creating a single heartbeat by their union. This beat is the drive that produces day and night, summer and winter, heaven and earth, and all duality in nature—without one, the other could not exist. Their dance of desire eternally creates newness. The Vampyre Lovers entice us to expand our own sexuality through the other sex, and also to recognize the opposite within ourselves. As we each have a unique and particular nature, there exists within us our opposite, or aspects of us that are outside of our awareness. By recognizing and utilizing these opposite aspects, we can transcend opposites in the tangible world without losing our sense of self.

The green heart symbol of the Empress is here inverted, as is the Emperor's symbol, creating the red heart worn by the female Vampyre lover. This denotes the interchanging qualities that appear in their union. By engaging both our yin and our yang aspects, we ignite potent new powers, understanding, and liberty. Reconciliation with our unconscious side brings greater mastery to our life along with a deep feeling of completeness. When this card appears, we are being told to trust our instincts, to choose and be devoted to the person or thing we desire. This can be a desire to return to our perfect spiritual state, often evident by a feeling of excitement and warmth towards life and the people around us.

The Lovers drink from the lifeblood of each other, but who is the Vampyre and who the victim? Who is giving and who is taking? The image can be read either way, as both give and receive in equal measure. The figures are intoxicated by each other, floating in the tranquility of each other into the newfound wholeness of themselves. The white roses are pure devotion, while the red

rose represents both passion and the unification of fire and water—which is blood. This card is ruled by Gemini, the sign of communication. As the most transmutable of the air signs, air here is about drifting thoughts, communicating messages, and weaving a web of unspoken meanings. The death-head Hawk Moth here symbolises the interplay of opposites, with its black and white pattern, while its skull pattern reminds us of the nature of love in putting to death our needs or egos for the object of our love (self-sacrifice). The moth's connection to metamorphoses cannot be overlooked.

Shadow

The shadow of the Lovers can present itself as a lack of unity or devotion, either in a relationship or on an inner level. Perhaps there are things we need to reconcile, difficult choices we need to make—are you hiding from a decision that urgently needs to be made? We may be indecisive, contrary, or inconsistent. Possibly we are reaching for something not yet attainable, perhaps projecting an ideal of love or an image of what is missing in ourselves onto another, rather than seeing the real person. The Lovers shadow can also reveal that a difficult time of self-sacrifice is approaching. Depending on the question and surrounding cards in a spread, this card in a shadow position can represent oversentimentality, jealousy, disharmony, separation, estrangement, or the ending of a relationship.

THE CHARIOT

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Cancer; Moon Rules; Jupiter Exalted; Connects Binah with Geburah on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Lord of the Triumph of Light; The Child of the Powers of the Waters

Essence

Victory, conquest, and triumph. Willpower. Achieving control through daring and authority. Recognizing your strengths, accomplishing goals, and self-confidence. Maintaining order in chaos. Commitment. Domination. A search for our place in the world. Chivalry and morality. Having faith in ourselves. Self-reliance. Mastering emotions.

Message

The Chariot contains powers that result from the realization of the previous card, the Lovers. The Chariot possesses the willpower and drive of fiery male energy, which is contained and modulated by watery female virtue, devotion, and purity. This card sits at midsummer and is ruled by Cancer, which represents the water signs (emotions) at their most fundamental (cardinal) beginnings. The Chariot's midsummer position endows it with powerful solar energies and symbolism—like the Sun blazing across the sky, glorious and triumphant. However, Cancer is ruled by the Moon, denoting that this solar power is kept in check by lunar qualities of harmony and subtler inner devotion. Drawing this card can be a sign that victory is about to be realized and favorable developments are soon to manifest. However, this card is also about setting out on new pathways. The charioteer is well prepared and has a sacred devotion towards his cause. He has examined all possible outcomes, and planned and prepared for his quest. With focused determination, he sets his sight clearly on his goal. This card tells us that we must do the same, for only then can we strike out into the unknown with daring and fortitude. The Chariot can point to a journey, whether physical, of spiritual initiation, or an endeavor to which we will be devoted. Perhaps we are to begin a new career or project, or are preparing to travel or explore new horizons.

The Chariot speaks of inner transformation, which should be guided with emotional stability and clarity. We must be diligent in our preparations and devoted to our purpose, then set our sights towards our goal, letting nothing deter us. It may be that a period of enhanced activity is before us, a creative or work-related project, or the start of a renewed devotion to a particular cause. This activity will be exhilarating and enriching—but in order to reach our goal we must remain committed, focused, and dedicated. We must learn the skills of the charioteer of maintaining inner and outer balance in order to keep to our true path, utilizing our gathered solar and lunar strengths to propel us towards our desire. This desire must also be in harmony with our higher self, combining our willpower with inner devotion to our highest calling and deepest virtue.

The Chariot can be telling us to let go of assumed ideas and to establish our own conception of the world. It often signifies a need to overcome contradictions within ourselves by re-aligning Will and instinct, emotions and thoughts, or idealism and realism. We are urged to become the Holy Warrior, devoted to the service of our own spiritual selves, to our God or Goddess, or to our own holy guardian angel. To fight for a cause in which we believe or to establish our own Will on a situation, to understand ourselves at a deeper level or to refine our power like gold in a furnace—these are all messages from the Chariot. Its overriding message is one of victory and triumph, stamping your Will, giving power to your ego, defeating obstacles and enemies before you, and reaching the rewards of your quest. This card can also indicate that the routine

may soon be upset and to be prepared for change; however, unless the Chariot is in a shadow aspect, its ultimate conclusion will be in clearing out stagnant ways of doing or seeing things. An existing relationship could be re-ignited with new vigor and purpose, or a new one may develop suddenly, perhaps causing the routines in our life to be altered. Professionally, we may find that a new position or long-term project is presented to us, one that we must contemplate or plan for, one that may mean major changes in our life. The Chariot indicates that a time of dedication is at hand, for which we must ready ourselves, put our affairs in order, and focus our mind. If this task is of a spiritual nature, a period of inner meditation and quiet contemplation is advised.

Analysis & Symbolism

Pure intention and inspired motivation are key to the Chariot, which represents the feeling of triumph in achieving our ambition and the victory of our Will. While this Will is egocentric and self-absorbed, it is not about earthly lusts, but more about dedicated service to a higher cause, towards heavenly glory. Our egos are essential and valuable aspects of us, giving us a sense of purpose and a voice to our unique spirit—the Chariot teaches us to forge our path towards glorification of our distinct selfhood. It is only when our ego stays true to our higher truths that our potential can be fully realized; when the ego is erratic or out of alignment with the flow of the Everlasting, we find ourselves coming up against obstacles or moving without direction. This is illustrated by the creature that draws the Chariot forward—it is a combination of the four beasts that represent each of the four elements in *Phantasmagoria*. The panther, serpent, crow, and wolf—representing the Will (spiritual drive), the emotions, the thoughts, and the physical, respectively—are here combined into one creature to denote that while engaged in the power of the Chariot, all these parts of us are

working together in perfect unison towards our desire. To harness these elements into a whole creates a foundation of immense collective strength.

On the Tree of Life, this card connects Binah (Understanding) with Geburah (Strength), which denotes the Divine Feminine descending upon our fiery strength of Will and bringing it into motion. That both the Chariot and the Priestess are ruled by lunar energy further illustrates this connection, whereby the Chariot can be viewed as champion and messenger of the Priestess—the subtle unconscious substance of dream images, of pure emotion and the innermost regions of the soul. She is represented here as the starry sky. The charioteer wears gold armour to portray his solar aspect and to remind us that like the crab (the sign of Cancer) emblazoned on his chest, his powers originate in the inner plane of self-awareness, protected by his own concentrated spiritual power, much like the concept of Chi in the martial arts. His chariot plows forward with deadly precision as he aims his arrows with perfect accuracy according to his Will and his ultimate goal. This also reminds us that the conclusion of our quest is contained in the preparations we make—the aiming and the foresight of judgment.

Shadow

The Chariot in a shadow position urges us to create for ourselves a secure and calm environment where we can examine, order, and plan the direction that we choose to go into the future. We must decide what it is that we truly seek and what we believe, then set our sight unwaveringly towards our target. In some cases this shadow indicates there are issues relating to the question that may include ruthlessness, domineering, or being constrained. It can point to a lack of progress due to obstacles, loss of focus, or a lack of confidence. Feeling trapped in our own fears, ambiguity, or weakened defences are other possible meanings. Sometimes megalomania is indicated—a lack of

self-control has led our drive and focus to a state of uncontrollable obsession. Someone related to the reading (possibly you) is displaying an obsessive drive or an abuse of position, or is ignorant of the needs of others.

JUSTICE

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Libra; Venus Rules, Saturn Exalted; Connects Geburah with Tiphareth on the Tree of Life
Kindred Spirits: The Daughter of the Lords of Truth; The Ruler of the Balance

Essence

The law of Karma. Centering, balance, and equilibrium. Healing. Precise judgment and coordination. Equality, fairness, and being impartial. Finding our inner centre with full awareness and objective perception. Destiny. Accepting past actions and setting a new course. Wisdom. Legal matters. Acquiring rewards, being accountable. Composure.

Message

This card stands for clear and objective perception. It is about observing and balancing factors relating to our question. It is time for responsibilities to be accepted, accounts settled, and to turn away from external action to become clearer about our inner motives. This may pertain to a particular issue or to our more general well-being. The result of attaining the equilibrium contained in the card is a feeling of purpose and calm, leading to an inner understanding of our destiny. Often the Justice card speaks directly of healing, because it's all about keeping systems functioning in unison, in this case the physical system of our bodies—food intake, blood flow, and nervous system. The Justice card reveals that we are in a

situation where we must be fair, impartial, and seek out the truth. This may involve issues of legality or an issue in which we must act as mediator. In many cases this card appears when we are being compelled to act as a councillor, either for another or for ourselves in relation to the subject of the reading. Justice often appears when we are concerned with doing what is right or making sure we receive our due. It may be that we need to bring a situation into equilibrium, or that we must first compose and centre ourselves in order to move forward.

Central to this card is the concept of Karma. Universal balance is sustained by subtle adjustments—realigning any fluctuation from the equilibrium through an opposing fluctuation. This is a regulation of nature, and so is purely natural; viewing it as a scientific principle helps us to understand it. Justice is not only a weighing of accounts, it is also the flow of delicate compensations which prevents everything from veering into chaos. Like the minuscule adjustments made by a moth through the direction of its wing beats, these infinite amendments and compensations establish balance and direct movement. Understanding the karmic balancing behind the eternal flow of life gives us insight into our own effect on events and why certain events or encounters are evident in our lives. The "cause" we set in motion at one time is returning to us as an "effect." Justice helps us to see how we chose our situation through our past thoughts and actions. Other ideas that present themselves through these Karma principles are: first, the realization that without one state of being, its opposite is not possible; and second, that whatever we "give out" is returned to us to compensate—giving out affection leads to affection being returned to us, while giving out anger returns anger to us to replace that which we projected out of us. In the Tarot, Justice represents the understanding that life is ultimately fair and just, and the nature of the card is deeply connected to recovery and healing. Sometimes Justice is a signal

to do what needs to be done. We need to weigh matters carefully and perhaps make important decisions about our future course. In relation to our query, it requests us to pay very close and objective attention to the situation.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Vampyre is well known to have intensely heightened senses—she tastes the blood and the whispers in a silent breeze. Every ethereal particle pulses through her body into her mind, reconnecting her with the knowledge of its nature buried deep inside her. Being in perfect equilibrium with the nature of sensations around her grants her an understanding of them on a spiritual plane, resulting in psychic abilities. The sword is a symbol of justice and of the balancing of the four elements. Its point connects with the earth, signifying that our thoughts eventually manifest in our earthly reality. The two cauldrons of blood hang like scales in perfect counterbalance; as well as illustrating the karmic principles, they also imply that things (including people and ideas) are of equal worth, although with different qualities.

This card is ruled by Venus, with Saturn exalted, and is the card of Libra. This points to the card having strong feminine qualities of healing and inner peace. Saturn's influence gives Justice a slow and precise nature, connecting her with the mechanics of the earth. She is never satisfied and constantly makes adjustments. She is the centre of past and present. She is the scales of equality and impartial judgment on one hand, but the sword of decision and justice on the other. The Egyptian goddess Maat is the goddess of justice, and in the hall of the Underworld named after her, the heart of a person is balanced against a feather; if the heart is heavier than the feather, the impure heart is devoured by a monster.

The most basic concept of this card is that of universal order—cause and effect—which reminds us that all things are in divine

balance. Justice also relates to feeling the consequence of a past mistake or good deed, and to being confronted with the results of past actions. In essence the card represents total centredness and inner balance, and being hypersensitive to alterations in our feelings, thoughts, or environment. This sensitivity gives us the power to make subtle adjustments in our state of being and behaviour in order to keep perfect poise and to navigate the flow of the Everlasting.

Shadow

Are we treating someone unjustly? Perhaps we are only seeing things from our subjective viewpoint and need to regain a more objective stance. When Justice is in shadow, it is sometimes a call for us to look at our past actions and see how they may have affected our present situation. Our past will continue to haunt us if we do not recognize our mistakes and make amends for them. Perhaps someone is blaming us for their own mistakes or is causing us emotional disturbances that are throwing us off balance. It may be that the general storms of life have led us to a place of imbalance or despondency. Depending on the question and the surrounding cards in a spread, shadowed Justice can reveal inconsistency, disharmony, or unjust conduct. Other aspects include not being truthful with ourselves or others, dishonesty, prejudice, hidden motivation, or a lack of integrity. Are you avoiding an important decision? Unfairness, inequality, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy can also be indicated here.

On a personal level it can be telling us that we need to withdraw into ourselves and realign with a higher cause, or need to seek a place of stillness where we can see things more clearly. In each case we should find a place of internal harmony through relaxation, focus, or meditation—or externally by making a truce with someone or something implied in our question. The Justice card encourages us to learn from our mistakes, to pay any debt outstanding (whether emotional, material, or spiritual) and then to move

forward—accepting that we have paid our dues or learnt any lessons from past trials—into a new, peaceful, and justified future. In this sense the card becomes an omen, compelling us to face our own nemesis.

THE HERMIT

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Virgo; Mercury Rules, Mercury Exalted; Connects Chesed with Tiphareth on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Magus of the Voice of Power; The Prophet of the Eternal

Essence

Introspection and solitude. Searching for answers within. Silence. Individualism. Being a "lone wolf" and doing things differently. Clear discernment, inner clarity, and self-discipline. Commitment. Stillness, quietness, and isolation. Completion and harvest. Offering guidance and wise counsel. Retreat and recuperation.

Message

The Hermit characterizes the need to turn away from the external world and concentrate on our own inner realm. He is uninterested in the superficialities of the masses and seeks answers within, knowing that they will come only through introspection and solitude. His search for truth is a solitary quest because the answers lie within himself. The Hermit uncovers his truth by discarding all distractions. When all proclamations of what is "truth" have been recognized as illusions and thereby silenced, the Hermit turns to silence as the ultimate truth. Only in silence is there nothing which can be represented by words, and therefore it is no longer a matter of finding the words behind the truth, but rather finding the truth behind the words. There are times when we start to question the obvious and

sense that there is a deeper reality to things we previously thought of as commonplace. When this card appears, it is a sign that we must withdraw from the world, or from a situation, and seek our inner wisdom—we must be silent in order to hear our inner voice.

The Hermit indicates that withdrawal or retreat is advised for a time. All distractions must be put aside, allowing for the crystallization of our unique spirituality. The card represents seeking of all kinds, particularly seeking deeper understanding of a situation and enlightenment. Sometimes the card is urging us to complete unfinished affairs—to avoid distractions so that we can focus on the matter at hand. Other times it speaks of a need for a time alone and a period of recovery—a time of reflection, without disturbance, where we can centre in stillness and create balance. The Hermit loves his aloneness, which is not loneliness (unless perhaps in its shadow aspect). Here he is potent energy condensed into a single point of light. The Hermit can indicate that we should not concern ourselves with people who do not understand us, and be confident in our individuality. He symbolises our unique inner spirit, and doing things our way, even if our way is unconventional. Often he can be instructing us to take a more emotionally mature attitude in a situation, to act modestly and with deeper contemplation. The card is more closely linked to the act of inner meditation than to external understanding (which is the role of the Hierophant). Occasionally the Hermit reveals that a time of great change is near and that we must start preparing ourselves by stilling our mind. He can also indicate retirement or the slowing down of events. Perhaps we have met or are soon to meet someone who is a spiritual guide to us. Perhaps we ourselves are being encouraged to take that role for someone related to the reading.

Analysis & Symbolism

Vampyres are often portrayed as outsiders. They are the dark strangers who wander in the shadows. Exotic loners, they are beyond the boundaries of society. They have secret knowledge, hidden lusts, and occult powers that set them apart from mortals. The Hermit card displays this aspect of their being. Dwelling in the darkness, Vampyres seek to draw life into themselves to reinvigorate their spiritual powers. This image of the Vampyre teaches us that before we reach the light, we are led through the apparently danger-filled realms of our personal shadow. The light they seek is lifeblood itself, a deep, ancient light.

The Hermit teaches us that the integration of the shadow inside us is a prerequisite to the emergence of a whole total being—he seeks internal fulfillment within, drawn from his hidden depths and from the very essence of the deep earth. The Hermit card is the zodiacal trump of Virgo, which is the most earthy of the earth signs, calling to mind the myths of Vampyres conserving a handful of soil from their homeland. Here we see the Hermit emerging from the pits of the Underworld (the shadow)—he has tamed the wolf (his animal side) which, like Cerberus, guards the gates of this Underworld.

The Hermit has a unique dual symbolism. We can see him as coming forth from his quest in the shadow world, having isolated himself in this wilderness in order to obtain deep insights. He now brings these insights with him in order to teach and guide others. In this aspect he is the "lantern of the world," illuminating the masses with his hard-won knowledge, represented by his flaming torch. On the other hand, the Hermit symbolises our personal quest towards enlightenment. We can see him as wandering away from the material realm towards the light of his eternal spiritual belonging, fulfilled by the wealth of the inner realm. In this case the material realm represents the fickle, ego-driven illusions of the

masses. The craving of social acceptance and the accumulation of possessions in order feel important—it's all an empty promise, a delusion that is never satisfied. For the Hermit, possessions and social status are all dull, banal, and irrelevant. He has no need to chase after such deceptive and transitory enslavement. His focus is on an internal quest to penetrate the mysteries and secret origin of things. This relates to his alternative title as "The Prophet of the Eternal." He is the selfless servant of his higher, actual self—growing in depth like roots into the deep earth.

Astrologically this card is ruled by Mercury, which relates to his role as a messenger. Virgo is the most receptive (mutable) earth sign and symbolises the womb, to which the Hermit is the secret seed that fertilizes the egg. He contains all four elements, illustrated by the four elemental objects he carries—scepter and grail (his staff), the knife, and the skulls (the spoils of the Underworld).

The Hermit's primary quest is an inner search for enlightenment. The word *enlightenment* evokes the idea of an unreachable, supernatural feat, but it is simply finding (or more correctly, *feeling*) our true natural connection to the Universe: oneness with the Everlasting. We will have experienced this feeling of absolute oneness with the immeasurable and infinite light of Being that is our original source at times in our lives, even if for fleeting moments. It can occur while lost in the wonder of a beautiful landscape, relaxing in a summer garden, in the joy of sensuality, or merely when sitting drinking tea while the rain seems to dance in lights outside the window. It is a feeling of simple bliss, where everything seems perfect, almost trance-like in its nature. With this sense of intense well-being, warmth, and belonging comes a disconnection from the commotion of our thinking minds and a reconnection to our more natural feelings of heart and spirit. Oddly this experience often makes us feel as though we are disconnected from reality because we are not used to it, but in truth it is very close to our

natural state of being. The further we are from this feeling of oneness with all around us, the more isolated we feel, giving rise to the illusion of separation. And so enlightenment is simply the process of developing this feeling of connection with the divine light that is our source. Rather than adding something to us, it is about removing the layers of separation that we have built around us, allowing the light that is already within us to shine forth. It is not about gaining an intellectual understanding, but about feeling the joy of belonging and emotional well-being.

Shadow

If we are feeling lonely or detached, the Hermit may appear in his shadow aspect. By engaging with his positive attributes and realizing that a time of aloneness or separation from a situation is needed at this time, we can turn from our loneliness to an appreciation of the lessons and gifts available in our aloneness. It could be that someone is trying to alienate you or is attempting to make you feel rejected or peculiar—this is only an attempt to project their insecurity onto you.

In other situations the shadow of the Hermit can be telling us that we have cut ourselves off from a situation or from the external world too much, or that we need to be more involved with people around us. Perhaps we have built up a fear or suspicion of the outside world that we need to mend. Depending on the question, this shadow card can also denote narcissism, bitterness, rigidity, or alienation.

FORTUNE

Alchemy: Planetary Trump of Jupiter; Connects Chesed with Netzach on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Lord of the Forces of Life; Fortuna and the Nornes

Essence

Fate and destiny. Change and movement. Expansion and momentum. The end and beginning of a cycle. Developments, continuous growth and success. Unexpected gifts or opportunities. Enterprise. Creativity. Wholeness. Personal vision. Faith, humility, and acceptance.

Message

The Fortune card depicts the Universe in a perpetual state of change. When this card appears, change, movement, or expansion is inevitable. The card is about destiny and how everything is woven into the cycles of existence. While it most often denotes good fortune, it is more generally relates to fate. Often it foretells of an unexpected occurrence or a change in the direction of events. It is strongly connected to the notion of luck—as in an unexpected gift, a chance encounter, or an unanticipated surprise. Events change direction or start to move at a rapid pace—often a positive breakthrough or a sudden realization greatly alters our perspective of the matter in hand. An important development relating to our question is about to occur, and we must stay alert in order to recognize and utilize it. The wheel of the Universe is turning, opening a doorway of opportunity to us. These windows open and close briefly, so we must be bold and decisive in order to grasp them. Fortune teaches us that the destinies of all life, including our own lives, are interwoven together in an invisible tapestry. Events that we are not aware of are affecting

our lives, and things are coming into alignment in a way we had not anticipated.

Many traditional Tarot decks call this card the Wheel of Fortune, relating to the gradual turning of the Universe in its natural cycles, just as the star constellations circle in the night sky. Every star, and every person, has its particular placement and path on this wheel and is also subject to the larger cosmic cycles. Our personal placement is identified in our astrological makeup (see Kith & Kin for more information). Illustrated on the card is this wheel, which symbolises the eternal rotation of nature's cycles—cycles that are reflected in all of life, including in you and me. It is seen in the evolution of the seasons and the cycling of night through to day. Once we realize that we too are woven into these cycles at a deep level, we start to appreciate our connection and purpose in the greater scheme of things. This allows us to predict and gather insight into the flow of our life and feelings. While this cosmic wheel is in perpetual motion, it should be noted that the very centre remains static. Within each of us is a microcosmic wheel containing all the elements in the Universe, some of which we have greater connections with than others. While we each journey with the spiraling forces through our life, we also have a hub at our core to which we can ground, allowing us to stay focused throughout our journey. This place of inner stillness and calm relates closely to the qualities of the previous card, the Hermit. The Fortune card may be telling us that we should seek out this central position so that we can get a wider perspective of the given situation. If we've been struggling with a problem, this card can signal that we can find answers by centering ourselves. The card also indicates the presence of cycles, rhythms, or sequences which should be investigated.

Analysis & Symbolism

As we have seen, Fortune is closely linked to the concept of fate—spinning the destiny of each person. Whether we believe that our fate is "written in the stars" or that life follows a particular natural sequence, it is possible to get a sense of the flow of events by looking at the underlying cycles in nature. In some respects this card implies a letting go, throwing caution to the wind and putting our faith in the hands of chance. Often we experience chance events that appear to be accidents; however, these events are part of a greater universal scheme which is invisible to us from our earthly perception. The art of the fortune-teller, and of the Tarot itself, taps into these subtle invisible currents. Fortune is the planetary trump of Jupiter, whose primary nature is that of expansion. On the Tree of Life, Jupiter is throned in Chesed, the sphere of mercy.

The act of constant motion keeps the Universe in a state of balance and stability, just like a wheel that needs continual momentum in order to remain stable. The three Vampyre creatures illustrated on the wheel represent the forces which keep the wheel in motion. At the right is a half-panther Vampyre, which represents the positive force—this is the active and creative energy which initiates the fire of life (summer). To the left we see a serpent Vampyre, who is the negative force of retrospection and dissipation or decay (winter). At the top we see a sphinx-like creature made up of the four elemental animals—its role is the preserver and connector of the other polarities, allowing their momentum to spin the wheel and churn out everything into existence. The eight spokes represent the stations of the year. The four elements are represented by the coloured gems—air (yellow) at the top and earth (purple) at the base, with fire (red) and water (green) at right and left. The white gem of spirit is at the centre, while surrounding the wheel are roses of corresponding colours.

Shadow

Generally the Fortune card means good fortune, because the nature of Jupiter is expansion. However, when in a shadow position, the card can indicate a number of things. It may be a signal that we must realign ourselves with the natural flow of things or that we must find the courage to throw caution to the wind and take the opportunity presented to us. Perhaps we need to centre ourselves and find a place of calm in order to get a clearer view of the situation. Here Fortune can also indicate that we feel events are whirling out of control or things seem out of our hands. This doesn't only apply to negative feelings; perhaps we are feeling dazzled and dizzy by some wonderful new encounter or event in our lives. At times the shadow of Fortune can mean that a disappointment is foretold, and that we should prepare by centering ourselves and remembering that the wheel will soon turn in our favor if we keep faith and are joyful about the blessings we already have. Other interpretations that may answer our question include withheld feelings, lack of opportunity, or the extremes of fatalism.

STRENGTH

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Leo; Sun Rules, Uranus Exalted; Connects Chesed with Geburah on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Daughter of the Flaming Sword; Anuket and Hebe

Essence

Strength and courage. Passion, energy, and action. Virtue and pride. Charisma and creativity. Joy and light. Tempering force with benevolence. Composure and self-control. Magic power. The glory of the Sun. Acting calmly and maintaining poise. Open-minded. Talents and creative gifts. Divine Initiation. Spiritual power and kingship.

Message

This card teaches us that we have the inner strength and power to endure and triumph. This strength is solar in nature, as the card is ruled by the Sun. It is a steady, invigorating power that is all-encompassing and exuberant in its nature. Like the Sun, it penetrates all around it with its vibrant energy—an energy both fiery (active) and watery (inactive), in perfect balance. The fiery lusts are represented by the panther, which has been tamed by the watery impassivity of our feminine aspect. This balancing of the positive and negative results in a vitality that is both passionate and spontaneous, yet centred and stable. It is creative, bold, and determined whilst at the same time being composed and compassionate. This mastery of our passions allows us to employ those same passions for the glory of ourselves and those around us. It also energizes our subtler watery emotions, giving them energy and positive creativity. When the Strength card appears, it usually indicates that we must engage with our unique vitality and personal power, allowing it to shine forth with enthusiasm and glory, while remaining benevolent and composed. The strength represented here is one of love and forbearance, a love for others yet also a love for our own power and creativity.

The message is that we must dedicate ourselves to our tasks with passion, creativity, and joyful energy. This may be in order to give positive energy to a situation, to help us realize our potential, or to succeed in an endeavor. We must fight for our interests and the interests of others. Perhaps we need to increase our motivation in a situation or task, be more reliable and steadfast, or be more courageous or centred in our emotions. It may be that we need to withdraw for the moment and re-energize our spirit. In relationships the Strength card tells us that we must find balance, devoting ourselves to love without losing ourselves to the compulsion of our instincts. It can also indicate that a new relationship is emerging that will fill

us with vitality and joy, or that an existing relationship will take on new passions or loving understanding.

The card possesses a quality of simmering sensitivity, a sensitivity that makes us aware of the deeper essence of things, where our feelings are empathetic to the subtle flow of emotional and creative energy around us. The lights, sounds, and movements in nature around us touch us at a level where we are at one with the deeper core things, connecting with our spiritual selves. At its most potent, this connection allows us to understand or control these essences as we absorb everything with more awareness. Emotions such as love, joy, anger, sadness, and fear are no longer seen as obstacles but as potential creative energy. The mastering of our emotions and animal instincts allows our true strength to flourish—it is not a matter of fighting or repressing these forces but of accepting them and recognizing them as ancient powers living within us. Our endeavor is to neither damn nor emphasize the forces that are described as "lower" instincts but to tame them, using their energy to provide us with the courage and vitality needed to realize our goals.

Analysis & Symbolism

The card called Strength represents the astrological sign of Leo. Here we see a raging panther, his fierce animal lusts and tremendous power and strength exploding forth in fury. We then realize that all this potent energy is tethered and directed by the delicate hand of the Vampyress. As if by spell or sorcery, she holds back this blazing force; it is she who has the true strength. She now possesses all the fierce energy of the beast while still retaining her beauty. She understands the beauty of the beast and has absorbed its power, allowing her mastery of this dynamic hunger. She is open and naked in her expansion towards the blinding light. This allows her to absorb the exhilarating power and glory of the Sun, which rules the sign of Leo. In one hand she holds the leash that channels the

potent eroticism and lust of the beast, while her other hand holds aloft the Holy Grail—brimming with the flaming energy of those passions transformed through love. In *Phantasmagoria* the Strength card connects Geburah (Severity) with Chesed (Mercy), indicating that its energy is one of both passion and compassion.

The animal instincts and lusts within us are not integrated by struggle and repression but through affirmation and surrender—by overcoming old fears, restrictive conditioning, and delusional moral ideas. When passion is independent of false morality and rationality, we gain the power to transcend repression and create an intoxicating feeling of enthusiasm and self-worth. A scintillating awareness fills each moment with creative energy and sensual bliss. By accepting all of life, ourselves, and others and rejecting nothing, we allow ourselves to be exhorted in the flow of divine energy. The Strength card is the beauty and passion that unites our spiritual and animal aspects. This results in a glorious sensuality that blossoms into cosmic rapture, an all-embracing love for all life. By harmonizing the animal and the civilized, we project a personality that is inspiring, creative, and self-confident, while displaying a deep warmth and paternal nature towards others and the natural world. We gain the skills to thrust our power and desires deep into the world when necessary, while remaining benevolent and nurturing when needed. When tamed, our natural animal instincts become exhilarating desire, erotic love, vibrant passion, enriching sexuality, joy in life, rapture, and true vitality. The blaze of masculine fire settled in the watery feminine vessel, kindling a heat that spurts upwards like seething blood. The Strength card is a symbol of the dissolution of our egos into the Everlasting in an ecstatic union with our inner self-god.

Shadow

The untamed panther is our repressed fears or lusts, sometimes hidden behind false morality, crude bravado, or a grotesquely distorted ego. If unfettered, our ego can become destructive, ultimately leading to our downfall. Alternatively, depending on surrounding cards in the reading, the message here can be one of a lack of power or authority. Perhaps someone else is abusing their power or employing the baser forces of their ego against us. We are urged to regain our power by utilizing the energy of the card, unleashing the invincible bloodthirsty beast that is our servant and guardian. Unleash hell in our imagination and our enemies will cower and falter. It may be that we need to reassert our authority not just with others, but within ourselves. Perhaps we desire something, and this card is encouraging us to remain proud in the knowledge of our self-worth and open in our self-god, resisting the urge to chase our desires and allowing our higher self and intuitive power to bring them to us at the perfect moment. We should remain kind, virtuous, compassionate, and exhilarated. Sometime the message is that we should remain dignified, determined, and light-hearted when what we desire does not materialize as or when our ego would like. The shadowed Strength card can also indicate cowardice, depression, self-pity, weakness, addiction, or lost hope. When we allow our baser instincts to control us, repressed aggression, violence, or abandonment of our values or virtues can be the result.

THE HANGED MAN

Alchemy: Elemental Trump of Water; Connects Geburah with Hod on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Spirit of the Mighty Waters; Prometheus and Attis

Essence

The Dying God. Sacrifice. Surrender. Restraint or blockages. Unconditional devotion. Self-denial. Emotional release. Fantasy, illusion. Psychic abilities. Suspension. Patience and faith. Seeing things from a new perspective. Reversal. Dilemmas. Mysteries and mazes. Redemption, revival, rebirth. Enlightenment. Maturity and wisdom.

Message

The Hanged Man represents a time or situation in which we must wait patiently. We are urged to have faith and silently await our destiny. We have reached a point where there is nothing more we can do to influence a situation but allow ourselves to go with the flow of events. We must let go and suspend ourselves from any action, trusting in our higher self and destiny. This can be within a particular situation, or on an inner plane. Sacrificing our ego and Will to the flow of the Everlasting leads to transformation and enlightenment. Passing through times of inactivity or suffering aids us in breaking through worn-out behaviour, old ideologies, or false morality. Often it is at these times that we most want to influence a situation, but the message here is to surrender to silence. This may be contrary to our instinct, but we must find a place of quiet within our heart and have faith in our destiny, knowing that we can face any future outcome, and that fate is our guide. The solution lies in our very helplessness.

The Hanged Man is also an omen telling us that things may change drastically—how we perceive a situation may be turned upside down, or events may take an unpredictable turn. Becoming fluid and flexible and taking an alternative approach may be the key in this situation. The card urges us to reject old ways of seeing or discard past behaviours that no longer work for us. A complete turnaround may be needed. Often this period of inactivity is forced upon us and our role is just to let things unfold in their correct time. This attitude is necessary in order to acquire an expanded understanding of a situation. Patience plays a large role here.

An important message contained in this mysterious card is one of redemption. By releasing control of the ego and giving ourselves up to the authority of the Divine, we are rewarded with profound new understanding. By remaining still—free of worries, hopes, and agendas—we deconstruct the self-imposed preconception or limitations of our negative thoughts. This allows our higher self to process things on our behalf. Often we find that by remaining still, suspended in time, things resolve themselves sooner and more efficiently than if we were to engage our conscious beliefs. If we are suffering, we must realize that it will not be without end but is a pathway to greater understanding. The Hanged Man is a symbol of self-sacrifice. He can appear when we are being guided towards putting our interests or desires aside and putting others first—surrendering our wants for the benefit of another or putting right a selfish act or recognizing what we have neglected.

The Hanged Man has a deep sense of mystery about him and can represent dilemmas or labyrinths, puzzles, or contradictions. Truth is hidden behind a mask, outside of our awareness, or hidden within its antithesis. Something may be unveiled and we must be careful not to disturb the eventual outcome by influencing the outcome with our ego. The card also teaches that the most obvious approach to the problem is not the always the correct one. The Hanged Man

is also about finding truth in a paradox or contradiction, and he can trigger a revelation in perception. By looking at things upside down, new horizons can be discovered.

When relating to questions about our professional or social life, this card can indicate that projects, promotions, activities, or relationships are delayed or not yet formed enough for us to act. Relating to partnerships or romance, the card can teach that we must think about the feelings of another or remain patient and wait for things to develop. The overall message of the card is that we must give up the struggle, not reacting to the actions of others or to unfolding events until we gain a wider perspective.

Analysis & Symbolism

The card show a demon Vampyre suspended on a cross. He is tethered by the roots that have grown up from the earth (old beliefs and emotions) and is partly composed of this web of roots. This framework represents our external framework—our personal myths and all that we define ourselves with in our external image. This framework is dissipating, exposing his innermost core, symbolising that all we thought to be true is a lie. It is now only our unconscious, divine structure that supports us; our deepest emotions are exposed. The mask has been destroyed and we must face fears, silently trusting in our higher self. The outer framework of our ego and self-image is discarded so that new life can emerge. The picture speaks of redemption through an absorption into the unconscious—overcoming the ego so that we are strengthened in our faith and enriched in our spirit. Sacrifice leading to resurrection. The demon's lifeblood is draining away to be caught in the bowl, representing self-sacrifice and the transfusion of old, poisonous self-perceptions. It is the ego sacrificing itself in order to be resurrected in the divine self. In this light the Hanged Man can be viewed as an initiation rite, a purification of our soul, and insight into our narrow limitations. This

allows the ego to become more virtuous and empowers our higher self. The card symbolises a descent of the light into darkness in order to redeem itself and become one with its divine origin. As the elemental trump of water, this card speaks of dissolution, in contrast to the creativity of fire. The demon hangs helplessly upside down as in a womb, suspended in the darkness, awaiting transformation. The serpent creates a cycle, which relates to the idea of transformation. It spirals downwards in order to drink from the bowl of purified blood and so continues the cycle of death and birth, much like the cycle of the seasons in nature.

The Hanged Man or "Dying God" is an image that appears throughout mythology. A motif representing suffering leading to resurrection. Having been wounded by a spear, the Norse god Odin was hung nine days and nights from the sacred tree, gazing down in deep thought into the unfathomable depths of Niflheim, the Land of Mists and Darkness (and ice). Through his suffering he obtained secret knowledge, allowing him to create the magic runes, which gave him power over all things. The sacred world tree, Yggdrasil, could be identified with the Biblical Tree of Knowledge and illustrates that wisdom could only be obtained through self-sacrifice—the passive endurance of a painful experience and recognition that overcoming such negative situations creates a reawakening of self. As Odin hung wounded on Yggdrasil in order to gain enlightenment, so we gain deeper spiritual understanding by passing through life's trials with faith, light, and grace. The hardships of winter create the gifts of spring, just as the seed needs the hard earth to push up against in order to flourish.

Despite our fears we should be aware that adversity and hardships make us stronger in order to break through into new light. Fear is irrational in nature and does not necessarily reflect the real situation, but rather it directly touches our most primitive instinctive fears. These are the deep, unfathomable, and often irrational instincts that

the mind does not want to unravel, making the fear more of an obstacle to us than the actual situation itself (which we already have the skills and courage to deal with). In this respect the card can represent our irrational fears and nightmares—fears of rejection, loneliness, or loss. We should use our creative imagination to accept the sorrows of life and transform them into knowledge and power—deep, dark, poetic, and beautiful. The gradual defeat of our fear sets free all the creative energies which have been bound up with our sadness.

Shadow

The Hanged Man can teach us that we may need to sacrifice something to achieve something else we desire, or that an aspect of our life has become solidified. In this case it urges us to change our environment or activities and find peace and joy in new experiences. This will help us still the mind if it is focusing too intensely on a particular problem. In more general terms, it could be that we have become too ridged or set in our ways. Spiritually it can symbolise a fossilizing of our spirit, emotions, or beliefs, which have become condensed and now only hold us down by their dead weight.

When in shadow the card can indicate that we or someone related to the reading has lost faith or is burdened with sadness or regret. Perhaps we feel we have no purpose or we feel drained of energy, or never have time to relax. Other negative meanings include feelings of defeat, loss, or emotional blockage, as well as a loss of self-confidence or self-worth. Futile attempts at trying to regain something we have lost or refusing to accept reality. Psychological problems or feelings of hopelessness and depression are also indicated here. Also, dilemmas, cryptic problems, and emotional mazes—anguish, nightmares, and retribution.

DEATH

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Scorpio; Mars Rules, Pluto Exalted; Connects Tiphareth with Netzach on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Child of the Great Transformation; Thanatos; Hypnos

Essence

Transformation. Conclusions. Change. Rebirth. Sleep, hibernation, and resurrection. Letting go and moving on. Secrets of life and death. Forthcoming success or evolution. A parting or separation. Growth and decay. Fear of death. Initiation, astral travelling, or sorcery. The Underworld. Past lives. Spiritual growth and evolution.

Message

The Death card is seldom an indication of physical death, but rather a logical development of existing conditions. It is really no more a symbol of physical death than any other Major Arcana card, as the essences in the cards can appear in any situation. For example, the passing of a loved one could just as readily be expressed by the Sun (as happy memories) or Temperance (as dissolution and reunification); indeed, the feeling experienced from the loss could be represented in each of the cards. The Death card relates to conclusions and transformation. It can point towards an important ending to something that initiates great change. It can denote the completion of a cycle, the ending of an era or chapter in our lives, a time when one door is closing in order for another to open. Changes can be very painful for us if we focus all our emotions on what has been lost rather than realizing that things need to end in order for new things to begin. This can include the ending of a happy experience, such as a holiday or time spent with friends and family, or a sad experience, such as the loss of a job or relationship or the passing of a loved one.

It can also represent moving to a new home or place of work. While leaving behind the past can be difficult, especially when it contains happy memories, the change is necessary for us to continue into new horizons. Not always is the change or transformation a sad one. The Death card symbolises all transitions, and so could relate to a wonderful ending and new beginning, perhaps the end of a project or a difficult endeavour, or transition from a single life to a married one. Release and ending a negative chapter in our lives can also be the message in this card. We fear change and death because we see it as obliteration, when in truth it is a transformation.

In order to grow and expand in any aspect of life, the old must die to give birth to the new. We continuously depart from particular episodes in our lives, whether from childhood, youth, relationships, images of self-identity, or old beliefs and attitudes—within these endings are new beginnings. Each moment we die in the present so the future can unfold. Nothing can be lost, as it becomes part of us and is a process of evolution. The Death card teaches us that experiences in our lives are a continuous source of growth and that there is great value in letting things go naturally without clinging to them. Death is not so much about loss as it is about transformation. The skins we shed become the nutrients that new growth feeds upon, just as fallen leaves decay and provide energy for new plants. A fear of death or change hinders our enjoyment of living. By accepting that nothing is destroyed but instead transformed, we no longer struggle against the cycles of creation. Understanding and accepting death allows us to embrace life in all its wonder and beauty.

When related to our profession or practical issues, the card indicates an end of an activity or position so as to free us for new duties. Also, the ending of a job or project. In relationships a period of development could be coming to an end; a period of intimacy may be ending, for example, if a new child is on the way and our duties and devotions are transferred. Perhaps a time of separation or the ending

of a relationship is foretold. On a personal level, the Death card can illustrate the decay of the veils of a self-myth or worn-out ideology that has been hindering our spiritual progress. The card urges us to detach from unnecessary layers of emotions and thoughts—this may cause sadness but also a sense of release and completion.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Vampyre myth is deeply interwoven with the concepts of death and reawakening. The image presented here is a Vampyress in a deep deathly slumber, her body in a state of hibernation and trance-like coma. Her body is dead, but deep within her, black blood stirs and ferments. Her silent soul is in a process of putrefaction, descending into the Underworld. Just as a moth metamorphoses within its cocoon of death, so she is transforming. Her essence of putrefaction seeps into the surrounding roses, sucking out their colour. From the opposite viewpoint she is sucking in the energy of the blooms to regenerate herself. The old blood seeps from her eyes, forced out by the fresh blood of her last victim transfusing within her. Her black heart jewel is a symbol of love and death—the nature of love as an act of death to self. The serpent represents the rhythm of decay and becoming as it slithers from the tomb (death) to taste the scent of the roses (birth). The card is ruled by Scorpio, the equilibrium of the water signs. The life-preserving power of water is also a symbol of immortality, as is the serpent through its shedding of old skins.

A descent into the Underworld to gain spiritual rebirth is a recurring theme in many mythologies (the Greek Persephone, most notably). This reflects the concept that the essence of new life is drawn from the decaying substance of an old life. The old matter has descended and putrefied, enriching the soil for new germination to take place, implying that death is the enrichment and complement of life. The decaying matter propagates the new seed. This transforming and becoming is seen in the seasons. Winter is

the ending needed for new growth in the spring. The discarded skins that contained summer's energy return to the soil and provide the nutrients that nourish next spring's life. This is not only about the passing of things in the physical world but can be the passing of a phase in our lives—a move, a marriage, a new beginning. It can also be a description of the creative process, the gathering and use of past memories, ideas, and stories. Even our past before our birth, or perhaps from unconscious origins. By bringing these things together, discarding some and reshaping others, this metamorphosis becomes the cauldron of rebirth from which something new and wonderful is born. It can be a work of art or can relate to your personal inner journey, a picture of some enlightening revelation.

Scorpio is the astrological sign of the Death card and represents water (the emotions) at its most balanced. As with all zodiacal Major Arcana cards, it is demonstrated by the three Minor cards that it rules over. These are the Five of Grails (disappointment) the Six of Grails (pleasure), and the Seven of Grails (sensual extremes, dissipation, and intoxication). When we balance disappointment and dissipation, a transformation into deep pleasure (the Six of Grails) is the result, creating a transformation into new hopes and inner joy. The Vampyress wears a crown with black thorns. In many myths the thorn is a symbol of enchanted sleep, intoxication, and death, as depicted in various fairy tales by the pricking with a needle and sleeping for one hundred years. The blackthorn tree is also related to a sharp, penetrating type of healing; a sharp clarity, like antiseptic; and the sharp scent of pine needles. The Death card is about healing too, by putting to death old ways to make room for vitality. Death is not an eternal end but a transition into a new condition or development. Life is eternal in its essence, if not in its form. It is necessary to release your breath so that you are free to take another. In this sense we are freeing our breath—not losing it but gaining the next breath. If we were to hold on to our breath, we would

suffocate. This concept can be applied to holding on to past hurt or rejection, or to the ultimate transformation of physical death—a release from our earthly journey, all our disquiet made peaceful, our joy made sacred, our questing and achievements expanded into the tranquil bliss of the Everlasting. Resting in the mystery, beauty, and glory of the Divine, unencumbered and free—towards unimagined horizons.

Shadow

The pain and fear of separation is a deep shadow of Death; we must take time to grieve our losses and try to come to terms with them. The inability to accept change or resisting change (e.g., clinging to the past or to a failed relationship) can develop into covetousness, self-pity, or venom. Often a long, drawn-out death of a situation or relationship is far more painful than accepting the change and severing the bonds with sharp clarity. Poison and intoxication lead to destruction. Sometimes this shadow aspect denotes the stagnation or ending of a relationship. Desperation, chasing illusions, or the inability to accept our fate. Feeling stifled or helpless. This position can also warn us that something in our lives is soon to change drastically and that the transition will be difficult; we are urged to prepare ourselves by stilling our heart and mind. Perhaps we are resisting a change in our lives due to fear of the unknown, or are unwilling to change our ways.

TEMPERANCE

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Sagittarius; Jupiter Rules, Mercury Exalted; Connects Tiphareth with Yesod on the Tree of Life
Kindred Spirits: The Daughter of the Reconcilers; Iris; Nemesis

Essence

Alchemy. Combination, synthesis, and refinement. Creating balance. Dissolving and binding. Fusion of opposites. Healing and inspiration. Female creative power. Conception. Objectivity. Inner transformation and self-realization. Moderation. Patience and diplomacy. Compromise or reconciliation. Peace of mind. Tranquility.

Message

Temperance is the card of alchemy. It is concerned with dissolving, combining, and moderating the elements in order to create a balanced whole. It is about discretion and composure but also about the correlation and fusion of opposites. This card describes the process of refining and purifying energy—this can be healing or emotional, intellectual, or creative energy. The quest is to use our deliberation and discernment along with our creativity to reach a perfect equilibrium. From a personal perspective, Temperance is the act of coming to terms with ourselves, combining and balancing all of our attributes to find completion and peace of mind within ourselves. By achieving this we discover a new inner harmony and feeling of tranquility and stability. If applied to our spiritual life, Temperance has the power of great transformation and enlightenment. The card is the zodiacal trump of Sagittarius, which represents a mutable and feminine (watery) form of fire. This combination of fire and water is the magic process that brings conception and fulfillment—the perfect solution.

When Temperance appears in a reading it is a sign that we need to moderate our behaviour, distill our emotions, or use particular elements to bring the situation to a balanced or harmonious conclusion. Often this can be achieved at an inner level by stilling our temper or igniting our creativity. Aided by the surrounding cards, we are urged to look objectively at the situation and discover the underlying forces at work by moderating and increasing or distilling particular influences. If the reading is about our spiritual well-being, the card is an indication that synthesis and refinement will transform our current state to a higher order. The equalizing of forces is often achieved by the neutralization of opposing energy and compensation. This has a rationalizing effect where we begin to see all sides of on argument or situation. Each thought or perspective is countered with its opposite, and then refined or rejected until we reach a distilled synchronicity. Temperance asks us to seek the deep significance of a situation and objectively evaluate it. Accurate calculation and fine-tuning is the key here.

Temperance can indicate a necessity for moderation, compromise, or reconciliation within disagreements and conflicts. It can break down deadlocks in arguments, modify difficult situations, and present us with a solution that was hidden. The card speaks of cleansing and rebirth and is rife with healing powers on all levels. Professionally it indicates the culmination of a project or situation, or people working tougher as a team. Emotionally it relates to a deep understanding and mutual respect in a relationship, where the needs of each person are met. Sexually it is characterized by deep sensual intimacy and gentle eroticism. Often the card urges us to show diplomacy or self-restraint, to take a measured view of something and refrain from indulging any particular force or stance. This perfect point of the central position is maintained by the different elements swirling in the cauldron, creating a place of equilibrium and tranquility where they converge. Temperance is also the search for our innermost core of being and

becoming conscious of new and higher energy not yet experienced. This act of purification grants us the power to eliminate accumulated belief structures that have congealed and now hinder our progress. The card can indicate that we should look within for solutions, to balance ourselves and re-create our reality.

Analysis & Symbolism

The female Vampyre dances a ritual as she works her alchemy—adding and combining, stirring and distilling. The potion she creates in her dark cauldron contains all the elements in a precise recipe, in accordance with her design. She merges fire with water, which creates a vapour that derives from the reunification of that which has been dissolved. This vapour is the result of combining opposites, which creates something new as an act of conception—both elements are distilled and expanded together through their union. This awakens a hidden power, a new element that is unique, containing aspects of each opposite. The process dissolves old frameworks of belief or thought patterns to create a more spiritualized force. The Vampyress carries a bow, symbolic of Sagittarius and its nature of controlled movement and rhythm. Her arrow represents the point of precise focus, which has been dipped into the elixir, ready to penetrate with newfound potency. The myth of the huntress Diana is also reflected here by the bow and arrow. The entrance into new light and understanding is symbolised by the radiant gateway in the background, connecting the spiritual and earthly realms.

The merging of opposites represented in Temperance can be understood through the card called the Lovers. That card symbolises the union of the Emperor and Empress as reflections of each other; in Temperance, the two have become one, resulting in the birth of completely unique energy. They have sacrificed themselves to each other and are reborn as one. The process of death here is the formula for continued life, as the sating of the hunger of each incomplete

element to refine its formula by dissolving into its opposite. One spiritual lesson here is that before the we can truly transform, all our negative ego-centred behaviour and thoughts must die. The fire boils the water while the water silences the fire, forming the vapour as a symbol of converting lower forms to gold by the alchemist.

Shadow

Refining our attitudes and conduct can be a difficult undertaking. In shadow this card represents a loss of temper, a move away from balanced emotions or moderate action towards erratic behaviour. Our unfettered ego recoils at any attempt to dissolve it, and so putting our desires to death can be very painful or conflicting. This also applies to changes that we may need to take in our lives—such as overcoming addiction or controlling our feelings or negative thoughts. A shadowed Temperance card can indicate a number of other issues that may be contained within a situation. Difficulty in finding a balance, perhaps in organizing our time or reaching a conclusion. Difficulty relaxing or finding moments for reflection. Being unable to juggle two or more facets of an issue. Inability to make a decision, ego-centred or extreme behaviour, conflicts, or dissipation. Alternatively the shadow can point towards an unbalanced lifestyle, inability to resolve disputes, and rigidity.

THE DEVIL

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Capricorn; Saturn Rules, Mars Exalted; Connects Tiphareth with Hod on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Lord of the Gates of Matter; Pan; Seth Essence

Procreative energy. Sex magic. Vitality, euphoria, and ecstasy. Dynamic masculine energy. Instinctive passion. Blind impulse. Masculine sexuality and fertility. Ambition, glorification of the ego. Inspiration realized. Light-hearted or mischievous. Originality, rebellion. Iconoclastic. Stamina. Wealth. Secret plans, trickery. ESP. Ritual.

Message

The energy of the Devil is like that of an exultant goat—lusty, mighty, and earthy. He is blissful in his ecstasy, enriched and vibrant in his enthusiasm. When this card appears we are being inspired to thrust with full passion towards our goal. Engaging our potent creative energy and following our impulsive instincts with intense exuberance is the message here. Our dynamic force of Will and our lust for results will drive us forward to the achievement of our desires. The Devil can be an indication that we are soon to receive a flash of inspiration or that our enthusiasm or passions will be ignited by something, perhaps a person, a creative project, or a dazzling idea. Feelings of euphoria or ecstasy will blaze through our blood, our pulse will quicken, and our senses heighten. This energy can take any form, from a renewed vitality and zest for life to an inflaming of the heart or spirit. Our enhanced creativity takes new directions and our capability to manifest this inspiration gathers momentum.

The Devil allows us to feel the deeper sensual essence of things behind their materialistic structure. He is the bringer of light and

energy into the solid darkness of the deep earth. He does not transcend the earth, but rather represents the lust for life within the deepness. The card represents the fire within the earth and in nature. Its only concern is self-expansion and the continued regeneration of evolving forms. It is the fire within the seed that draws in nutrients to energize itself. This earthy nature is also characterized by an unpretentious attitude—its magnificence is found in its spontaneous exhilaration, not in intellectual determination. It does not identify itself through thoughts and agendas but through impulsive creativity. The card can teach us to reject all possessiveness (which leads to frustration) and instead surrender with complete abandon to our sensuality and pleasure. The Devil is iconoclastic by nature and can symbolise the breaking down of structured ideologies or intellectual dogmas, or freedom from false morality. We are inspired to seek the joy and ecstasy in every manifestation, taste the Divine in everything, and appreciate all things. This healthy, down-to-earth attitude brings us wholeness and a more light-hearted perspective towards a situation. Life is for living, and releasing the inner tensions of a problem through humor or with a devil-may-care approach can free us from the emotional torment of that issue. Pure Will of purpose delivered from a lust for satisfaction is a key to this card. In love it can indicate a deeply passionate relationship, a spontaneous sexual encounter, deep sexual love, sensual lust, or eroticism.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Devil portrayed here is not the evil figure as characterized by some interpretations of the Bible, but rather an image of fiery creative energy. As the trump card of Capricorn, his nature is that of a wild mountain goat, representing cosmic creative energy in its most material and masculine aspect. He embodies our instinctive lust for life and the burst of energy that brings new life into existence. The

powerful arching horns represent divine spiral energy materialized in earthly form—Capricorn being the most impulsive and initiative of the earth signs. The Devil has an insatiable animalistic passion that reaches up into heaven and down into the centre of the earth, connecting earth energy with divine inspiration. This creative union allows the indigo earth energy to rise and melt with the gold cosmic energy above itself. As with all the cards, any negative qualities only emerge when the particular energy is out of balance with the whole.

The Devil can represent a spiritual awakening if we gain control over our unbalanced animal instincts by reuniting them with our higher self, where they are transformed into a more natural, sensual bliss. This illustrates that the Devil card is both our animalistic lusts exalted to a higher spiritual plane, as well as the anchoring of our divine creative inspiration in the deep earth. He is a representation of the god Pan—potent, lusty, often intoxicating, and sometimes mischievous or roguish. He is forever impetuous, beautifully carefree, hearty, deeply sexual, and earthy. He is the archetype of the ancient primeval forest god—sometimes known as the Horned God or as the Lord of the Forest. His true nature has been misrepresented in the past and reduced to dark debauchery by the wicked, the self-deluded, and the self-righteous, either out of fear or religious politics in order to gain power. The Devil himself is not concerned with this projection, as he is iconoclastic by nature, laughing at all things self-important and falsely moralistic. He is a master of trickery. Other factors adding to his misrepresentation may be a widening separation of humankind from the natural environment and the rest of creation. The deep forest then changes from a respected place of awe, power, life, and sustenance to a place of fear, separation, and the unknown. The rise of rigid intellectual thinking has alienated humankind from the rest of creation as well as from the mysterious. This has the psychological effect of a feeling

of isolation and separation, developing into a fear of both the physical and the spiritual, a fear of the cycle of life and death, of nature, even a fear of our own human sensuality and physicality.

The two angels embody our higher selves enthralled and impassioned within our physical being, enraptured in their sensuality and passion, as represented by the bubbling cauldron of blood. This cauldron contains all the potency of life seething into new possibilities. As the zenith of midwinter (Saturn), the Devil also illustrates the heedless driving force of life reaching from the dark earth into light, much like the fermenting forms of nature such as insects and ivy craving for life. The reversed pentagram is a symbol of the earth element exalted above spirit, to which it has gained control via physical manifestation and willful action. The two upturned points are symbolic of the rampant horns of the goat, further enhanced by the fact that the card is exalted in Mars (creative energy and willpower).

Shadow

In a shadow position the Devil can imply imprisonment in animalistic or materialistic cravings. It could be that our lusts are gaining too much control over us and distracting us from a more balanced position. This can manifest in overindulgence, dissipation, and bondage to our cravings or addictions. This feeling of enslavement could be related to an unhealthy obsession or that indicate we are becoming being enslaved by, or submitting to, another's Will—in each case we should engage the light qualities of the card in order to counteract the issue. Perhaps we are fighting against or rejecting our animalistic nature rather than incorporating and controlling it. Other shadow aspects of the Devil include feeling demonized, persecuted, or guilty, or being made a scapegoat. It can indicate that someone is projecting their shadow onto us, or that we are being judgmental or bigoted. A greed for power, money, or overindulgent

and selfish behaviour is tied up with the situation. If unchecked this can lead to obsession, abuse of power, gluttony, lewdness, depravity, or perversion. It may be that we just need to settle our passions for a time to avoid superficiality, recklessness, unscrupulous behaviour, and destructive temptations. Further shadow qualities include selfishness, hysteria, fear, repressed sexuality, infertility or impotency, confusion and trickery, possessiveness, and obstinacy. An unbalanced indulgence for idealistic morality can lead to self-righteousness, hypocrisy, megalomania, hatred, and tyranny.

THE TOWER

Alchemy: Planetary Trump of Mars; Connects Netzach with Hod on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Lord of the Hosts of the Mighty; Thor; Shiva

Essence

Destruction of old structures. Breaking down blockages. Revelation. Dramatic changes and revolution. Reversal and renewal. Escape, salvation, and deep inner transformation. The end of a cycle. Upheaval. Truth and freedom. Blind destruction. Emotional outbursts. Catharsis. Omens. Healing and cleansing. Atonement.

Message

The Tower symbolises a rapid and dramatic change or upheaval that forces us to re-evaluate everything. The card speaks of a complete reversal of events or a breaking down of established beliefs or situations. The change indicated here is often sudden and sometimes explosive in nature. It is unexpected, turning everything on its head, and calls for great courage, since it can be extremely disorienting. The Tower represents a bursting forth of energy that has built up within a situation; this makes it extremely potent and sometimes

shocking, filling us with feelings of dread and chaos. All that we thought to be true, or our perception of an issue, will be disrupted. Perhaps all our detailed plans, structures of security, or hopes will be swept away, leaving us dazed and confused. Being faced with a crisis or catastrophe is the catalyst that forces us to reassess our position, and to make changes that have been long overdue. While such dramatic changes can be painful, they are for our long-term well-being. The energy of the Tower has the ability to break bonds and blockages which have been hindering us, allowing space for new beginnings to sprout. Just as a forest fire burns away the dense tangle of vegetation in order to lay the ground bare for new shoots to emerge, so the Tower acts as a purging of a situation or issue. How we react to these dramatic changes is important in allowing the renewal to flourish and the experience to be a less painful one. By viewing these challenges as birth pains towards new and wonderful beginnings and recognizing that the disruption occurred because it was needed, we can focus on the positive.

Knowing that every ending is a new beginning allows us to no longer fear the natural processes of change, but to gain self-knowledge and enlightenment because of them. We also feel a tremendous release, knowing that we have finally been forced to renew our life and reclaim our freedom from something that has been hindering us. The card can represent a painful yet crucial process of healing—a corruption or infection needs to be dug out in order for the disease to be eliminated. This can apply to physical health, spiritual well-being, emotional healing, or merely the removal of rigid ideas or beliefs. It can become a spiritual revolution for us, or can free us so that we can experience greater happiness, whether it be a new relationship, home, or job. A dogmatic belief system may be destroyed by sudden insight, making way for new understanding, or we could be urged to see reality as it truly is. This allows us to see life, or a situation, with completely new eyes. Perhaps our

perspective of the situation or issue has become too narrow, or we must break free from old habits, clearing out the old to make space for the new.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Tower is the embodiment of divine fire—cosmic energy in its crudest form. It represents the annihilation of an old era in preparation for a new era. We see a mighty fortified tower, its solid defensive structure illustrating the old era, the beliefs and fossilized images we have built around ourselves over time to ensure our security and defences. This fortress can become a prison, and we can become cocooned in our defences. Built to give us security, the Tower now brings us insecurity as we worry if our fortress is strong enough. This can lead to a hardened personality or isolation, disconnecting us from our higher self. Some who seek only the security of materialism form hard shells and lose all promise of hopes and dreams, reducing everything to its most base form. As we realize that the threat is not from outside of us but is a reaction to our own fears, we can begin releasing our insecurities. The fire within the Tower has built up and is now burning itself up, trapped within the solid fortress. The card represents the sudden destruction of this stronghold. A bolt of lightning strikes the towers, sending the walls crashing down. This allows the explosive fire to release in a burst of energy. Because we cling to our security, sudden changes that penetrate our defences can be terrifying. The release from our petrified prison of hardened life can become our salvation, as the act of letting go and having to trust solely in our fate can be very cathartic.

The purifying fire burns away the old, consuming falseness and rigid behaviour. This can often be a painful experience for the ego, which is the foundation of our defences, but it allows our true personality to flourish again—represented by the Vampyre rider. As the questing hero, he overcomes each trial of the Tower and obtains

a trophy which aids him in reaching his goal and his greatest aspiration. These trophies are unique to the trial and relate directly to the challenge passed through. In this sense we see that the unique trial has its unique prize, and so contains that prize within itself. Passing through these trials is not merely about picking ourselves up and dusting ourselves off to fight another day, but about shedding layers of worn-out myths that are no longer needed and gaining a treasure, a new belief, that is unique to our individual creative spirit.

Shadow

The extremes of the Tower energy, if not released, result in war and ruin. In life it can present itself in conflicts, quarrels, destruction of plans, or a sudden catastrophe or trauma. We may be feeling paralyzed by our own limitations or that a growing frustration is seething beneath the surface. Perhaps we are being blocked out by someone's defences and need to reassure them. This card can also indicate that rebellion or revolution is imminent or that we must break out of a prison that someone has built around us, in a personal or political sphere. The meaning of the shadow of the Tower depends on the surrounding cards and the question asked. It can also depict blind destruction; a bond with the material, leading to imprisonment and insecurity; undergoing a crisis; victim mentality, cowardice, tragedy, or loss. Also desperation, tension, clinging to emotions, or refusing to let go of an issue or situation. Perhaps we are taking the easy option or clinging to safety when we should dare to be bold.

THE STAR

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Aquarius; Saturn Rules, Neptune Exalted; Connects Chokmah with Tiphareth on the Tree of Life
Kindred Spirits: The Dweller Between the Waters; Nuith; Isis

Essence

Crystallization of Inspiration. Spiritual insight. Wishes. Liberation, fulfillment, and promise. Imagination. Peace and tranquility. Calm and perfect faith. Rejuvenation. A unity of thought and spirit. Carefree, optimistic. Union with the Everlasting. Following our star. Living in the perfect present moment. Siren songs and haunting beauty. Kissing.

Message

When the Star appears in a reading we can be assured that hopes and wishes will begin to unfold. It is the source of inspiration and dreams. The card represents the clear star-filled sky, with its promise of beauty and enchantments, which bewitches us with its gentle blessings and deep magic, enticing us outside of ourselves and up into a higher plane. The Star is the light music of incantation, forever pure and shimmering. When we turn our sight to the wonder of the starry heavens, we no longer feel the weight of the earth, lost in the crystalline song of bliss and longing. This otherworldly rapture is deep and haunting, yet soft and tranquil, reconnecting us with the source of the Everlasting. The Star whispers that we can live in the perfect moment of pure harmony, elevated above the rigidity and worries of everyday life. The Divine has been refined into the purest essence within us. The card brings feelings of well-being and relaxation where we are inspired, uplifted, and anointed with celestial blessings. The Star is also the card of clear sight, as though the divine starlight has crystallized with our earthly

being and emotions. This keen vision is creative in nature, allowing a vast spiritual overview of any situation and radiant solutions or optimism. Our ambitions, desires, or aspirations are being realized, aided by the flow of our higher selves from the Divine. The card tells of blessings, promises fulfilled, and intuitive understanding. By allowing ourselves to be captivated and guided by the flow of this cosmic inspiration, in faith and trust, all things become possible. We must follow the light of the Star to guide us in our endeavors and towards fulfillment of our wishes, allowing its haunting beauty to lift our wings with renewed hope.

The card can teach us to achieve a more discerning perspective of the situation and the boundless potential of our expansion. When the Star appears, the impossible becomes possible—all we must do is wish upon the star, embrace certainty rather than possibility, and put our trust firmly in the hands of the eternal wonder of the Universe. At these times in our lives, others will be drawn by our radiance, inspired by our grace, and spell-bound by our spiritual glamours. The Star is ruled by Aquarius, the Water Bearer, and symbolises the part of ourselves beyond our self-motivated ego into the realms of the unconscious and dreams. She is the intermediate between our earthly existence and our divine origins—just as our bodies are made from particles of distant stars, so our souls bear the nature of the eternal spirit of the cosmos. The more we hand over ourselves or an issue to the care of the Everlasting, the more freedom and fulfillment we receive. It is important for us to remain cleansed and healthy, in body, heart, and mind, free from the willful hunger of our egos—this allows the glittering river of life to pass through us. It is a good time to submerse ourselves in the beauty of nature, to draw inspiration from things that present themselves to us and to begin new plans or projects. We are granted a wish whenever this card appears in a reading, which we should state clearly and gracefully, with feelings of expectation and joy. New promise

and happiness will emerge, new and fulfilling relationships, the first flutterings of love, or the rejuvenation of existing relationships are also indicated here. In our practical lives, we discover hidden paths towards our dreams, renewal of hopes, and the realization of wishes.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Vampyress is clothed in purple, the colour of Aquarius, which rules this card. She is a muse, gazing with both innocence and expectation as she empties her grails of blood. Her dual nature of longing and certainty are bound together in her wonder at the haunting beauty of creation. She is the channel between heaven and earth, spilling the blood of divine inspiration in an act of both adoration and ritual. The soft song of her yearning is transformed through her silent prayer—which is the spell that she weaves with unwavering faith. This faith is unreserved. She hopes and trusts all things, representing the beautiful process of cosmic inspiration received and made manifest on the material plane. Her medium is the blood, which she spills on both life and death, on summer and winter, reflecting the eternal cycle of life. She is the Star Goddess who is open to the outpourings of the spiritual realm, passing it on as the channel used by divine energy to manifest itself on earth. She carries the inspirations of the cosmos with crystal-clear vision, realizing all possibilities. The seven-pointed star she bears is the Star of Venus, whose nature is all-consuming love and the longing in the depths of our unconscious ... the longing of life itself. This yearning is the creative impulse of the eternal in the waters of life that leads to endless new births, in nature and in our spiritual insight. In the background we see a path leading towards a shimmering star; this is the new hope released from the Tower and is our guide towards personal enlightenment. The bloody gravestone is symbolic of the sacrifice of our ego, which must be achieved in order to allow the eternal to flow through and guide us. The crow is the totem animal of the element

of air (thoughts), to which the Star is closely connected. To the left we see a statue that holds a candle, illustrating the making of an affirmation or wish before blowing out a candle.

The Star's prime energy is the joy of floating in the spirit stream of life and the fulfillment of wishes. However she is also the longing and anticipation of wishes yet unrealized and the vision of the inexpressible, that gentle and beautiful longing for the inaccessible. The card is a symbol of the unconscious yearning for our divine origins. The Star is the limitless part of our souls that seeks the invisible love of the Everlasting and the longing of the unconscious to abandon itself into the river of flowing tranquility and emotional surrender. It is the promise of everlasting love, peace, and bliss that encourages us to open our hearts and release our doubts. Now is the time to give in abundance so that we may receive the gifts and blessings promised to us. We must devote ourselves to the present moment and flow with the subtler stream of our unconscious and intuitive creativity. Whatever we dream of is longing to be crystallized in form. The Star is the inspiration of love rather than love itself, the longing and wonder at the beauty of creation. Emotions become crystallized in the boundless possibilities and ecstasy of existence through the outpouring of the lifeblood, which is the ethereal and immortal blood of the grail.

Shadow

The shadow of the Star can appear as doubt, faithlessness, broken promises, or disappointments. Perhaps we need to renew our vows and trust again in our own higher self to light a path before us. It may be that we are not seeing the whole picture within a situation and need to reconnect to our intuitive understanding with a clearer vision. Sometimes the card can indicate the end of an unfulfilling situation or a misjudgment. We may be in need of new inspiration or we may have sunk into a state of pessimism. Our dreams may

have been dashed, but often this is a phase leading to a clearer understanding of our true desires. The Star in shadow aspect can warn us that we are descending into a state of illusion and dreaminess that is hindering us from making clear decisions. We may be craving or thirsting for satisfaction and so should let go of our ego and allow our spirit to realign more gently with the flow of the eternal. Fanaticism, denial, temptation, or guilt can also be present here.

THE MOON

Alchemy: Zodiacal Trump of Pisces; Jupiter Rules, Venus Exalted; Connects Netzach with Malkuth on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Child of the Sons of the Mighty; Anubis; Medusa

Essence

Facing our shadows. Illusion and phantasy. Imagination. Dreams and nightmares. The fantastical and bizarre. Glamoury. Descent into the Underworld. Deep inner questing leading to the rebirth of light. Occult knowledge. Seductive sorcery. Addictions. Ghosts, phantoms. Eerie, macabre, or cryptic. The realm of the dead.

Message

The Moon card represents the depths of our unconscious and the fantastical aspect of our being. It is eerie and illusory by nature and relates to the deep psychological images of the soul. This card is often an omen that something mysterious, elusive, or intangible is contained within the issue. This may relate to the nature of the situation, indicating that there is a illusionary or cryptic quality present, or that the issue is deeply woven in our unconscious. Sometimes the Moon emerges when we are fearful or feeling lost or are experiencing haunting thoughts or emotions, or when the path ahead seems

incomprehensible. In this aspect the card is related to the sinister moonlight of our fears or nightmare. We are urged to take one step at a time along this mysterious path, to be aware of our inner signs and intuition in order to pass through these mists towards the light. The Moon is also a calling for us to look to our dreams and unconscious for understanding. We must put aside rational reasoning and trust in the realm of our imagination. Fantasy and creativity can aid us in revealing hidden messages from our unconscious. To unravel these messages we can employ dream analysis or create spontaneous art, such as creative writing or painting. This should be done without any logical thought. When the exercise is complete, we can use our reasoning mind to interpret and analyze the dreams or art. The card can also be a call for us to live out our fantasies, explore the unknown, or dare to deviate from what is safe and known.

The Moon teaches us that the night of fear and confusion will soon come to an end—we have reached the depths of despair or soul-searching and the Sun will soon rise. This relates to the aspect of the card as a journey through darkness to reach the light, where we will be reawakened to the joys of life and deepest understanding. This promise of morning comes after we have delved into the pit of our fears and gained control of our shadows. These fears and shadows then reveal themselves to be just illusions that only exist because something is blocking the flow of light. Discovering what these blockages are and sweeping them aside leads us to transformation and freedom. This requires a journey into the underworld of the unconscious and can be a daunting experience, where we must resist being led astray by shadows and illusions that are phantasms projected from irrational fears—our own internal magic lantern show, scaring us with nothing more than shadows. In these times everything seems strange and unfamiliar or extraordinary; our senses are heightened as we regress into more primal instincts. We should not fear these experiences because they cannot harm us;

rather we can view them as an enticing ghost story that concludes with an emergence into the Sun (the following card) and towards deepest self-knowledge. We will also gain greater skills in intuitive knowledge and expanded awareness. In many cases the Moon card is a sign that we are feeling lost or wandering aimlessly and that we must find our way back to our path and clarity of purpose. Although this card is shadowy and peculiar, it is not always disturbing, as it can be bewitching and has tremendous power to inspire creativity and visualization and to enhance psychic abilities.

Analysis & Symbolism

The chilling Moon hangs like an omen over an eerie path of poisoned mists. The mysterious light it casts (the unconscious) is the only guidance we have into the depths of the soul. The narrow path leads up between confining tombstones (the Underworld) towards the cathedral—the sanctuary and eventual escape from our fears into the twilight of day. The Vampyre bride represents our confrontation with our shadows and a personification of the fear surfacing from the unconscious. Her ethereal gown illustrates a fear of being swallowed by the realm of the dead and our inner darkness. Everything is intangible and sinister for the ego, whose only guide is the bewitching moonlight. In her hand the bride holds a blood-stained sickle, its Moon-shaped blade a symbol of dark intrigue. She has become the bride of death, a mirror of nothingness and illusion. It is midnight, the very depth of darkness and the axis where the deepest loss ignites the flicker of promise towards escape into the twilight. Like a pupa within a cocoon, she has become only intangible substance, yet to be reduced to this pulp of nothingness is the process of metamorphosis that transforms her into a new form. She emerges as a moth, reborn—enticed and directed by the Moon into the light. She has journeyed into the Underworld, faced her

fears, and conquered her shadows. Around her neck she wears the symbol of Pisces, which is the zodiacal trump of the Moon.

The moonlight that illuminates our nightmares can also guide us towards psychic messages and occult truths. It can be a signal for us to reject the ordinary and release ourselves from the prison of normality that we cling to for security, and to expand into the mysterious Universe that murmurs within the deepest parts of our soul. We can employ flights of fantasy and imagination to overcome blockages and gain intuitive understanding of situations and issues. Any experience in which our more primal senses are stimulated can lead us to undiscovered truths and alternative perceptions—whether through intense dreams, fantasy, psychological and physical exertion, or intense eroticism. We can glimpse behind the mirror of the soul and explore our personal underworld of mists and enchantments. Many of these mirrors reflect from the depths of old memory which is woven into our unconscious. They are partly genetic, passed on from our ancestors as archetypical themes and emotions that relate to the passions, struggles, and hopes of human existence. Perhaps these archetypal motifs emerged and evolved from a need to understand the world around us and our place within it, like a spiritual map, expressed in myths and stories. They were also pathways to explore and decipher mysteries of the spiritual realm. This mythical framework originates from an ethereal core within each of us, presented to us as messages from our higher self in symbols, dreams, and fantasy. Not only is this deeply woven web a map of our metaphysical landscape, it is the language of our unconscious which speaks directly to us through symbols, events, and seeming coincidences in our everyday lives. This synchronicity is purely natural, nature at its subtlest, most formless beginning—the foreshadowing and unfolding of our reality, as well as unique messages from our personal psyche.

Shadow

The shadow of the Moon can appear as phobias, primitive fears, morbidity, superstition, or anxieties. When in this aspect, it can also indicate that we are giving in to our fears or refusing to face our shadows. Sometimes by not incorporating our shadows sensibly into ourselves as a whole, they can poison our heart or mind. This can lead to addiction, drug abuse, bewilderment, or eventual lunacy. By not containing and controlling our own fears, shadows, or darker natures, we may project them on to others, making others the scapegoats for our poison through self-deluded morality. We may be urged to overcome our guilt or face up to our actions with honesty and sincerity. Perhaps we are bewildered, losing our direction and purpose, or are feeling confused and disoriented; in this case we should take one step at a time until we regain balance and perspective. Other negative qualities of the Moon include lies and deceit, self-deception, hallucinations, depression, derangement, and insecurity. Religious fanaticism, hysteria, venomous slander or gossip, paralysis, self-harm, suicide, or murder are the extremes of the Moon in shadow.

THE SUN

Alchemy: Planetary Trump of the Sun; Connects Hod with Yesod on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Lord of the Fire of the World; Ra; Apollo

Essence

Inexhaustible vitality. Triumphant glory. Ecstatic joy. Radiant beauty. Potent creative energy. Reconciliation, unity, and perfection. Spirituality and higher truths. Accomplishments, personal power, and brilliance. Rewards and wealth. Abundant and generous. Honour and virtue. Pride. Reconciliation with the shadow. Self-confidence.

Message

The Sun characterizes the source and power of life itself. This energy is all-pervading and all-encompassing. It is the glory of radiant light that fills the lifeblood of the Universe with brilliance and regeneration. When the Sun appears in a reading, we can be assured that our desires and our Will have ignited and are expanding into realization. This energizing power brings with it a thrilling vibrancy and clarity that burns away all our fears and doubts. The card is a sign that we are about to experience a magnificent sense of spiritual well-being and enlightenment. The Sun card represents our divine ego and is the process through which our greatest desires and passions are made manifest in our earthly existence. As all the planets orbit the Sun, so this central heart of power gathers all our elements around us in perfect harmony—now all our energies are available to us. Our spiritual Will, emotions, thoughts, sensations, and practical life are all working in beautiful balance, there is no struggle between elements, no wished-for future goals—everything is complete in the perfect present moment. This centering allows us to see the heart of any issue or situation with intense clarity. The power and vitality of this light infuses us with a new brilliance that makes all things seem possible. The illumination of the Sun reveals all that was previously hidden in darkness. The energy of sunlight expands our limits and invigorates us with triumphant glory and self-confidence. Feelings of ecstasy, joy, and majestic power are soon to be experienced, or a higher consciousness is now unfolding.

This card is a sign that the time has come for us to engage with our own glorification. With confidence and courage, we are urged to allow ourselves to shine. Now is the time to gather the rewards and acclaim for our achievements and to fulfill our wishes. By relaxing and giving ourselves up to the blazing lifeblood of the Sun, we can accomplish anything. This brilliance is both internal and external, and its energy can be passed on to others without loss. The Sun gives

its life-enhancing power with unconditional love and acceptance to all forms of life—it is limitless and pure, so there is no need for division or disharmony. Its illumination sweeps aside the trivialities of materialism or egotistical behaviour, replacing it with a glorious, all-embracing majesty. This card represents the ultimate source of inner light that is in complete harmony with the Everlasting, and its essential message is that we should strive to connect ourselves with the divine light of the Sun, the source of all life. In health matters the card is a sign of vibrant well-being and a recovery from illness. When applied to our professional or domestic lives, it indicates prosperity and great achievements; it can also be a prophecy for the conception of a child or attainment of our heart's desire. In love the Sun represents a vibrant, intimate, loving, and understanding relationship.

Analysis & Symbolism

The two figures represent the divine expression of the passive and active dynamics within the fifth element of spirit. Here we encounter the marriage of heaven and earth. The female, who usually represents the earthly and inactive energy, has become the active principle of heaven. Wearing the crown of Kether, she is related now to the element of air. The male has transformed into the inactive energy of earth, representing Malkuth and the material world. Their union brings together all the elements in perfect balance, while at the same time infusing each with the other's qualities. They feed from each other in pure harmony, becoming one by the sharing of lifeblood. The image also symbolises the reconciliation of our light and dark aspects and reunification with our shadow, as well as a harmony between our spiritual and animalistic natures. The blazing Sun both contains and expands the earth element (symbolised by the skull) and embellishes it with solar splendour. This symbolises the divine light drawn down and harnessed by the material world and the physical realm glorified by the spirit. The secret alchemy of the Sun is the

continual contest between two forces: the active, which burns the Sun's fuel to radiate energy outwards; and the passive gravitational force which draws into itself as the Sun's own mass. The active force prevents the Sun from collapsing in upon itself, while the passive allows the burning process to remain stable and condensed.

From our spiritual perspective the card teaches us that we are of the same essence as the Sun. Like each flaming star in the heavens, we are born from the cosmic energy of the Universe and are ourselves spiritual Suns journeying through time. Each of us finds our source in the Divine, our quest being to reunite our soul with our origin and realize our highest self. Our quest through the mysteries of life refines and purifies our spirit, until we rise reborn. By reconciling opposites and burning away all waste, we begin to mirror the nature and splendour of the Everlasting by vibrating at its same frequency, allowing us to share in the glory and ecstasy of life. We become both more compassionate and more passionate, more loving and more powerful, more spiritually aware and more deeply connected with the earth.

On the Tree of Life, the Sun is positioned in Tiphareth, at the absolute centre, where all the elements meet, representing all energy in balanced manifestation within the human sphere. This is the realm of beauty, power, unlimited energy, bliss, and freedom. It is the source of health and confidence and understanding, incorporating the powers of the Tree of Life in perfect harmony. After the descent into the darkness of the previous card, the Moon, we have now made peace with our shadows and ascend into the Sun. A newly awakened vital energy brings us victory and release from our limiting perceptions. We are now free to develop our own being, no longer wearing the vacant masks we employed as a concession to society. The succulent blood blooms are now ripe with the energy of the Sun, ready to be transformed into the golden rose of our unique and eternal soul.

Shadow

When eclipsed in shadow, the Sun can display negative qualities such as weariness, listlessness, and worthlessness. We may lose our confidence, or life can seem grey and cold. We must realize that this is merely a perception of reality, and not reality itself. A lack of enthusiasm or personal drive is also indicated here. Maybe we are in ill health or are suffering from emotional fatigue. If the energy is unbalanced in the opposite direction, the Sun in shadow can symbolise vanity, arrogance, false pride, delusions of grandeur, conceit, or egotism. Another message here is that we have not yet made peace with a fear or shadow related to the question, or that we need to balance our different elements to achieve unity.

JUDGEMENT

Alchemy: Elemental Trump of Fire; Connects Hod with Malkuth on the Tree of Life

Kindred Spirits: The Spirit of the Primal Fire; Horus; Ohyros

Essence

Making a clear decision. Taking a direct step or firm stand. Eternal energy moving forward, birth and genesis. Resurrection. Transfiguration, redemption, and liberation. Atonement for past mistakes. The birth of the new. Recognizing our true calling. Improvements or promotion. Correlations. Ceremonies. Freedom. Utopia.

Message

The message of this card is that a situation or issue can be solved by making a clear judgment. In order to do this, we must weigh all the elements and qualities to come to an objective and decisive viewpoint. This card is a sign for us to make a decision and act on it.

This judgment is made from a detached place, fairly measuring the various viewpoints to arrive at a true appraisal. A strong approach of discernment and discrimination is called for. The Judgement card also relates to reconciliation and learning lessons from the past. In essence the card is about weighing the actions and events of the past in order to put them to rest, allowing us to experience new beginnings, ideas, and horizons. It is the call to a new age and a final decision. This card teaches us that judgments are necessary—the effects of past events lead to the germination of a new seed of beginning. Judgement urges us to consider any issue or matter carefully and then commit ourselves without reserve. Rather than spending time rethinking a decision, we should employ all our powers in fulfilling its outcome. When we have taken the time to compare and understand all perspectives, we are endowed with the power and knowledge of each, allowing us to employ them towards our new plans. The card can also tell us that we are being judged ourselves, that we are in the process of reassessing our behaviour or looking for conclusions from past events. We should take a rational and honest investigation of ourselves, balance each position against its opposite, enhance what is of value, and correct mistakes.

Being objective and impartial allows us to see the true essence of things, free from personal opinions. This type of judgment involves a criticism based on contemplation, negotiation, correlation, and wisdom. This approach leaves room for redemption and understanding, allowing us to build a new future. The card is not a rejection of the past but the fuel for the flames of the new—a beginning that creates itself from the end of what has gone before. The card may be telling us that we need to re-evaluate ourselves, whether our stance or view of an issue, or at a deeper level. When Judgement surfaces it is a sign that the time is perfect for re-establishing a new order and making clear distinctions and commitments. The end of a journey leads to

a new horizon, freedom, and the riches of a new world (see the following card, the World).

Analysis & Symbolism

Here we encounter the trump card of fire. He is the lord of force and dominance, authoritative, self-assured, and poised. Judgement depicts a Vampyre risen from the grave; he is rejuvenated, confident, and commanding. This Vampyre of Judgement has burst from the tomb of the earth (old ways), reinvigorated and invincible. He is not working towards hope or entangled in the past (roots) but is the perfection in every moment, victorious in the present. As a symbol of reincarnation, the card represents the energy of eternal cycles, where new things are born when old opposites are harmoniously united. This card is the birth of that which was conceived in the Sun card. On an inner plane, it relates to expanded perception, liberation, and the unearthing of previously concealed abilities, or the creation of something more refined from the burning away of the past. Judgement is also a message of profound insights into time, omniscience, and eternal rebirthing.

The flaming cross illustrates the suit of Scepters at its most potent, balanced, and active in the material (skull), while the panther is the totem animal of fire, standing triumphant and watchful. In the background we see a scorched land where the tombs of the past are devoured by a new dawn of flame. Above the landscape hangs the silent Moon, a symbol of the feminine, inactive force which holds the active fire of the flaming cross in check. The union of these two energies gives birth to the child of the new era. The Moon and the fire can be viewed as the past (memory) and the future (thought). The Judgement card can relate to deep meditation, in which all spheres of time and space are woven into our understanding, giving us a bird's-eye view of any situation as well as a vast

spiritual vision. The endings of all things contain their beginnings, just as the beginnings hold the endings—the old contains the past and the young contains the future—reminding us that everything contains eternity. In a reading the card commands us to answer the call of the new awakening and to follow our personal calling. We are urged to ignite our personal drive and unique quality of spirit and to determine our own path. With this comes salvation and a rebirth of our power. The past and its mistakes are behind us, and we are ready to begin fresh with a newfound vision. This vision is eternally assessing and discriminating. The less subjective and biased we are, the closer we are to the Everlasting.

Shadow

The dark aspect of Judgement presents itself as injustice, dogma, a lack of insight, prejudice, and preconception. The card here can also indicate that we are holding on to the past, hesitating when we should be acting, obstinacy, stagnation, indecision, or irresponsibility. We may be denying the truth, hiding from a task, making excuses, or never getting past the initial stages of an undertaking. When we are feeling low and in need of hope or absolution, Judgement can show us that renewal is imminent. Sometimes the card warns us that we are ignoring a personal calling or avoiding moving into new areas due to fear or a lack of confidence. Now is the time to make our presence felt, to condense our fiery willpower into a fist of energy and drive forward with unwavering self-belief. Are we taking a narrow view or perspective? Only looking at things from our biased viewpoint? Are we holding back or exaggerating obstacles? This card in shadow also refers to making false judgments, denying justice, regret, refusing to accept that the past has gone, separation, or divorce.

THE WORLD

Alchemy: Elemental Trump of Earth; Planetary Trump of Saturn
Kindred Spirits: The Great One of the Night of Time; Persephone; Eurynome

Essence

Pure harmony. Completion and wholeness. The end of the quest. Synthesis between earth and spirit. Divine unification. Absolute peace and happiness. Fulfillment. Emotional pleasures, sexual love. Tranquility, luxury, security. Discovering our true self and our purpose. Self-identity. The cosmic plan of creation. The Elixir of Life. Immortality.

Message

The World represents the completion of the journey undertaken by the Fool. The original creative seed of cosmic consciousness has come to fruition, and the original spiritual essence of desire has manifested in the external world. The exaltation of the Fool is made manifest in earthly existence and our quest has been brought to completion. This card indicates that our hopes and dreams are soon to come true. Completion of a period in our lives, an endeavour, or a project is about to be realized. The card speaks of wholeness and synthesis, indicating that a sense of deep satisfaction and harmony is soon to come. This could be a time of relaxation and pleasure or an inner feeling of bliss and belonging. This wholeness often presents itself as a peaceful happiness, feelings of fulfillment or achievement, or the sense that everything in our life is working in harmony. The contentment represented in the World is not always one of tranquillity and rest, but can also be extremely dynamic or creative. It is the dance of life in all its forms, from the blissful balance of the elements to the invigorating vitality of ecstasy. The card is symbolic of our individual spirit in harmony with the natural

flowing and surge of the cosmic energy. Personal dedication is important. To experience the joy of nature's energies, we must be connected to it in spirit, heart, mind, and body, engaged with what is around and within us. As we begin to flow more naturally with the rhythm of life and its seasons, we establish a deep affiliation with the world around us. The four elements of our being (represented by the four animals on the card) work in perfect harmony, connecting our creativity, empathy, understanding, and sensuality with the natural world and our divine source.

When all these elements unite, we feel deep satisfaction and a sense of completeness. This completion is also a new beginning at a higher level of being. Malkuth becomes Kether on the Tree of Life and a whole new tree of deeper awareness germinates. When the circle is complete, it is possible for us to see things as they really are, as we have the whole image now in our very being. The stage is set for a new beginning and events in our life are in perfect harmony with the flow of the Universe—we are now at one with the Everlasting.

The World represents moments when all our elements converge—in ecstasy (fire), bliss (water), enlightenment (air), and vitality (earth)—creating absolute beauty (spirit). In readings, the World is a sign that our desires are soon to be realized—our only task is to believe and to align ourselves with the spiritual flow of nature. To receive the qualities and gifts of the World, we need to give ourselves up to it. This hints at the concept that the path is more important than the goal—indeed, that the path itself is the goal and the source of true happiness. Harmony and oneness with our external world and others around us softens the shells of "self" and "other" that is the cause of so much of our loneliness. The willingness to love without reservation becomes a joyful experience and connects us to the dance of life. New and wondrous synchronicity unfolds between inner and outer experience. The card is also related to finding our place in the world, self-identity, and following

our personal calling. In our profession it relates to success, achievements of our goals, or closure of deals and contracts. In love and relationships the card can relate to emotional tranquility, vitality, or security. It can indicate meeting someone who will become our companion for life. In general the World speaks of happy times in which we enjoy our existence with openness, authenticity, and vitality, moving with the rhythm of nature, of the seasons, and of our life. The card can also relate to marriage, celebrations and festivals, home, family, or ancestors.

Analysis & Symbolism

A female Vampyre dances with the serpent of life and death—the spiraling forces that eternally create new forms of life. She manipulates the cosmic energy of the Universe, giving herself up completely to the dance. The active and passive are in an eternal dance with each other, creating beginnings and endings and everything in between, making it impossible to separate the dance from the dancer. She represents the materialization of the essence of the Fool—the completion of the great journey and the Infinite descending into manifestation. She is actively involved in her dance of life, flowing with it, influencing it, and shaping it. Events and conditions become attendants of her Will as she weaves the web of the Universe in her own design. Her dance constantly creates new art-forms of existence, instantly re-creating what preceded them, transforming life with perpetual change. Her dance is one of liberation and alchemy. The serpent is one of the four animals featured on the World card, which represent the four suits of the Tarot. To the right we see the wolf (earth) display the white rose of Kether, also held by the Fool. The ten Sephiroth of the Tree of Life descend from this rose to indicate that the completion of the process down to Malkuth is also the beginning of a new, even deeper Tree of Life, starting the whole process again.

The picture displays various organic forms as a symbol of the crystallization of spirit in the material world. The card is about complete expansion and total union, symbiosis, and a connection of spirit and earth through love. It is also a picture of the completion and burning off of old Karma, allowing a new pattern to emerge. The World can symbolise reconciliation with our shadow, illustrated by the serpent's kiss. The serpent is not the contradiction of the Divine but its shadow, which we have created in order for the Divine to exist only as goodness in our human perspective. The eternal cycles of sex and death were previously seen as a threat to our soul, but when we realize that we are made from this same eternal essence, peace is found. Through the dance, light and shadow are suspended within each other and are united, returning us to our true source. Our final goal is reached and we return to oneness with the Everlasting. Now we see ourselves in a higher reality and the world as it really is. Embracing the shadows and fears has set us free, and we are caught up in the continual dance of the Universe. The boundaries of the ego and the Everlasting melt in a blissful reunion with our divine source, and we return to the ecstasy of the Fool. The establishment of our Earthly Kingdom is complete.

Shadow

The shadow of the World creates fear of separation, loneliness, or detachment from both the natural and the spiritual. A greed for material wealth or social flattery can lead to spiritual emptiness, selfishness, crudeness, or insecurity. Fighting against or rejecting our natural processes can result in obstinacy, inertia, frustration, ill health, disruption, destitution, or a lack of love and sensuality. The card in its dark aspect can present itself as a need for love and security, homelessness, seclusion, depression, or a lack of support. Poverty, delays, missed deadlines, lack of funds, or lost happiness can also be indicated. Also chaos and foolishness.

MINOR ARCANA

ACE OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Origin of the Fire Signs; Crown (Kether) of Fire; Essence of Spiritual Creativity

Kindred Spirits: The Daughter of Scepters

Essence

The Essence of Will. The Divine Spark. Great energy and the power of creation. Creative force and divine inspiration. Beginnings. Revitalizing power that awakens after all obstructions have been removed. Movement and potential. Pioneering. Adventure. Courage, decisiveness. Following intuition. Love of life.

Message

As Scepters are the suit of personal spiritual power and fulfillment, the Ace tells us that a surge of vitality and passion is beginning in our lives. It denotes that a seed of fearless exuberance has been planted in our life, the earliest spark of divine energy that will soon manifest into our material world, full of power and possibility. As the Aces are largely beyond our earthly understanding, this energy is at its very beginning stage and is not yet formulated, so we may not recognize it. To harness this power we must have a goal or framework towards which we can direct that power. When we draw this card, we can be assured that such energy is being offered to us, and by allowing

the free-flowing energies to have a creative outlet, we will be revitalized by this power as it blazes our entire being with renewed radiance. The ambition or desire to which we employ the power of this card will be achieved by trusting in our own creative potential. This potential could take almost any form: a leap in confidence, a burst of inspiration or enthusiasm, or a creative idea or innovation. The card represents a pioneering spirit and is an opportunity stirring in our life. By grasping this initiative with passion and courage, this new opportunity will manifest as a proposal, a gift, a professional advancement, a new spiritual inspiration, or synchronicity. In terms of relationships, it indicates that a new or existing relationship will bring deep passion and joy into our lives. Now is the time to act boldly and take risks, to think originally, and to transform our fighting spirit into direct action.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Ace of Scepters symbolises the spirit of our willpower reaching for realization in the forms of life—divine energy penetrating the realm of matter. The picture shows a blazing scepter—symbolic of the fiery creative powers of spirit—which is the basis of all external endeavors as an invisible inner impulse. Under this Ace's influence, we become a lightning rod for innovation and inspiration. It burns away worn-out or exhausted ways of thinking or acting, replacing them with new concepts and solutions. The Ace of Scepters, being the first card of the Minor Arcana, is the source from which all the following cards unfold. It contains within it all the potential energies of the other Minor cards, and so is potent with possibilities. It has the power to make the impossible possible, as it is limitless, unformed potency. As with all the cards, this type of energy is already part of us, but the Aces are of a very subtle spiritual nature and are often beyond our awareness. By trusting in our own creative potential, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

We must dispel disbelief, be daring and bold, and allow ourselves to be absorbed in the thrill of our creativity and personal power. By achieving this we will propel ourselves beyond our limits—limits that are merely illusions and phantoms of our own disbeliefs. On the Tree of Life, the Aces are associated with Kether, which is the crown and denotes something being lowered from above. They are also the root of the power of the elements—not the elements themselves, but the beginnings of the elements—and so this card represents the essence of the element of fire at its conception. It is the divine spark concealed in every created form and the birth of things from the Everlasting.

The form of the cross denotes the four elements, which are balanced in the central jewel of spirit. The sign of the cross is widely known to be feared by Vampyres, and in this context the scepter can be viewed in two ways: first, it can be a viewed as a powerful magical energy that can be used to ward off negative influences in our lives, whether they be adversaries, negative thoughts, or psychic attacks; second, it can be a sign that we must face our fears and destroy negative thoughts. Often the certainties and securities that we have been clinging to will be shaken by the energies breaking through from this card. This can be a disturbing experience, but when obstacles are overcome, a renewal of life takes place. With upheaval comes restlessness caused by our spiritual Will and creative urge to shatter a framework that has become confining, allowing our rekindled life force to awaken. The ten roses represent the ten Sephiroth on the Tree of Life, symbolising that all the following numbered cards are contained within the Aces.

Shadow

Feeling powerless. Delays, cancellations, or frustrations. Reluctance, impotency, and lack of enthusiasm. Blocked energy or creativity. Boredom. Failure. Worn-out ideas or stagnation. Obstacles.

Destruction through exaggeration. Arrogance. Negative thoughts. Enemies attempting to disempower us. Fatigue. Subservience. Inferiority complex.

TWO OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Mars in Aries; Wisdom (Chokmah) of Fire; Energy of Spiritual Creativity
Kindred Spirits: Veluel; Deniel

Essence

The Energy of Will. Dominion. Conquest. Command, strength, and power. Warlike energy. Fierce driving force and dynamic impulse. Daring and Pioneering. Proud or audacious. Taking the initiative. Original thinking. Standing firm. Persistence and tenacity. Commanding attention and respect. Justice and revenge. Shamelessness.

Message

The Two of Scepters glorifies our individuality, giving eminence to our uniqueness. It teaches us to employ new methods to gain personal advancement, to drive forward our unique spirit into the world, projecting our creativity and personality. When the Two of Scepters appears, it indicates that we can achieve anything and master any situation. It is the dynamic energy of fire brought down to Earth and manifested in our unique spiritual drive. It is time for us to stand proud, believe in our convictions, and concentrate our power towards our goals. We are urged to assert our Will and seize the moment. It may be that a situation is making us feel powerless or dominated; in this case we are being encouraged to reclaim our personal power. This situation could involve someone or something outside of us, or it can be an indication that we need to regain command of our feelings on a personal level. Often the card

is compelling us to rekindle our determination and take action. A decision may need to be made and now is the time to act dynamically. In many ways the card is not about long-term planning and intellectualizing but about being daring and spontaneous, as the suit of Scepters is about passion and inspiration. We are being urged to act forcefully and impulsively, whether to reach our goals, reclaim our power, or fulfill our desires. The card can represent a situation in which we must take the lead, in terms of a relationship, a professional endeavor, a creative project, or any situation in which we need to make a stand for justice. It can also signify that our energies are being brought together to flourish, resulting in the fulfillment of our ambitions.

Analysis & Symbolism

This card is the first formation of the fire of the Ace, which is fire at its unconceived, original source. Here the divine fire of the Ace passes into our being and then flows out into the world. This flow brings us an intense feeling of expansion and satisfaction. While this power is part of us, it is also separate from us in the sense that we are a channel for it, rather than its origin. The Two of Scepters represents the spontaneous energy of fire, acting through its impassioned impulse rather than looking to a goal or following a particular plan. The card is ruled by Aries, the astrological sign of the Ram, which beautifully illustrates the nature of its energy. It has an impulsive force which is driven by its passions, often without considering the possible outcome of its actions. It is dynamic and willful, exalted by its own determination. Independent, defiant, and assertive by nature, this card's boldness and tenacity forces a breakthrough in any situation. This lust for success is stable and is channeled perfectly without causing destruction of the whole. The power must be controlled, directed, and used wisely, due to its

potency and in order to avoid attracting any of the shadow aspects listed below.

On an inner plane, the card can indicate that a time of challenges is ahead, perhaps that an emotional or spiritual framework or belief needs to be broken down and replaced with a new perception. These times of change are difficult for us; beliefs and feelings which have been a comfort are shaken to their foundations and sometimes destroyed. However this process is necessary if we are to grow and develop. The outcome of such turbulence is that new and wonderful adventures appear before us once trials have been completed.

The channeling of the energy of the Two of Scepters involves keeping a clear head while evoking its force. If we are facing challenges, we should not allow ourselves to become a victim but instead remain defiant and proud while not crude or arrogant. Like the power of the Magician, this fiery power is spectacular and invigorating if used correctly but destructive if allowed to descend into chaos. On the card we see a Vampyre warrior in a ram-horned helmet standing defiant. His scepter is a bloody spear with which he thrusts forward his power to destroy his enemies. The image of Dracula as Vlad the Impaler is illustrated here. He stands in a fortress surrounded by fiery energy; in the background we see a watchtower, a beacon both as a solid place of energy (representing leadership) and as a lightning conductor, illustrating the card's qualities as a channel for fiery creative power.

Shadow

Destruction. Conflict or war. Rashness. Explosive violence. Aggression, arrogance. Egotism. Obstinacy. Domination or tyranny. Dread of challenges, cowardice, or avoiding responsibility. Weakness or a lack of confidence. Overly sentimental, unrealistic, or being unprepared. Lost potential. Depression or worry. Feeling powerless. Attacks from adversaries.

THREE OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Sun in Aries; Understanding (Binah) of Fire; Development of Spiritual Creativity
Kindred Spirits: Hechashiah; Amemiah

Essence

The Development of Will. Virtue. Vision and creativity. New beginnings and new horizons. Expansion and exploration. Awakenings. Radiance and vitality. Integrity, honesty, honour. Hope. Promises fulfilled, success in new ventures. Self-assurance, confidence, and inner balance. Trust and anticipation. Good fortune. Self-control.

Message

This is the card of vision and new beginnings. It is the onset of spring, where the intense energy of the previous card has now crystallized, transforming into a luminous vitality. Here the fire energy develops from the fierce passion of the Two of Scepters into a more structured inner harmony. The passion of the previous card awoke the sleeping earth from winter, allowing for the heat and light of the Sun to bring forth new life. In the Three of Scepters the fire energy has transformed into a structured plan, allowing for conception of the original spirit of fire to formulate. The energy now takes on a directed flow, in harmony with the cosmic laws. When this card appears in a reading it signifies that we are now connected with this cosmic flow and are being drawn towards new horizons and awakenings. It is a time to make plans, to prepare for a journey, and to set sail into the unknown. Perhaps a new and exciting project, opportunity, or event in is near. The card represents the beginning of a new cycle—a fresh breeze has entered our surroundings, filling us with enthusiasm and vitality. We are urged to use our skills of innovation and our sense of adventure to move towards new horizons.

Just as the Sun warms and nourishes the earth, so we are nourished by the exhilaration of a new phase of inner awakening. The time is perfect to start fresh endeavors and activities, to take the next step in our development, career, or environment. New or existing relationships are unfolding and crystallizing into deeper vitality. The card represents the creative urge to seek out adventure and begin a journey towards greater prosperity and happiness. We feel a thrilling sense of wonder as we visualize our desires becoming a reality. Our spirit is rekindled and we must now send our hopes and dreams into the flow of the Everlasting.

Analysis & Symbolism

It is important at this time to make plans for our journey, to state what it is we desire, and to prepare for the quest ahead. The card possesses strong qualities of virtue, patience, and centredness. This teaches us that once we have prepared and charted our journey, or have created our project and sent our wish or idea into the flow of the cosmos, we need to be patient and calm and have faith that the treasures we seek will come to us at the correct time. Being both noble and virtuous, the energy here also relates to our personal calling or talent. It may be that we are being encouraged to take the role of a leader or guide, inspiring others to greater achievements and using our understanding to help others on their journey. A noble sense of duty, patience, warmth, and our vision will aid us in this undertaking. This virtue in the Three of Scepters also implies that we must remain respectful and honourable in our quest, and we must accept the flow of our destiny with dignity, grace, and everlasting hope.

The Three of Scepters shows a Vampyress holding a ram-headed scepter in one hand (creative energy) and a red rose (virtue and harmony) in the other. Together these illustrate the male and female qualities contained within the card. The active (masculine) energy

of Scepters is here combined with the inactive (female) energy of Binah (her position on the Tree of Life). These elements are perfectly balanced, creating a force of both command and sensuality. The harmony of mind, body, and spirit has been achieved, illustrated by the poise and beauty of the Vampyress. She is immensely powerful in her rule of command—assertive and far-seeing yet sensual and adaptable. In the background we see her dark ship setting off on its journey into the unknown, representing the plans, desires, or projects and hopes and dreams that she has carefully prepared and set into motion. The ship is directed towards a new dawn, a watery Sun—reflected by the lantern on the ship—symbolising that our dreams and desires are already contained within our destiny. She awaits, still dreaming and visualizing her aspirations, patiently waiting for the promise and treasure that will come to her when the ship returns. The card is ruled by Aries and exalted in the Sun, which reveals more of its nature. Aries is the sign of active energy driving forward, while the Sun illuminates our lives with life-giving heat, brilliance, and steady vitality. When we see the Three of Scepters, it is time to accept our vision and be confident that we can obtain what we desire by reflecting on it with both excitement and stillness—creating an inner feeling of vitality and harmony.

Shadow

Restlessness. Hopelessness. Impatience. Lacking vision. Being unprepared for the way ahead. Fear of the unknown. Unfaithfulness. Disharmony. Worry and trepidation. Brooding. A lack of self-belief. Loss. Feeling lost or confused. Insolence. Undignified. Feeling trapped or confined. Attention seeking. Crudeness. Anxieties and doubts.

FOUR OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Sun in Aries; Mercy (Chesed) of Fire; Structure of Spiritual Creativity

Kindred Spirits: Nanael; Nithael

Essence

The Structure of Will. Completion. Order and structure. Manifestation. The laws of Creation. Unity. Arrangement and construction. Achieving our goal, prosperity, and rewards. Steadfast, reliable, and secure. Culmination of a creative undertaking. Spiritual idealism. Perfection. Sincerity, grace, and endurance.

Message

The previous card represented the beginning of an event, a journey, or an endeavor; here we encounter the completion of that journey and the rewards returned to us. The task has been achieved, the circle has returned to its beginning, and it is now time to gather the harvest and enjoy the success of our labours. Often this involves a time of celebration and excitement. It may be a feeling of joy and exhilaration, still elated and invigorated by our success. It may be a celebration of achievement or of an anniversary. Perhaps a quiet satisfaction and peaceful reflection on our achievements when work has ended and we enjoy the fruits of our labour. When the Four of Scepters appears in a reading, it can indicate that a difficult phase in our lives is drawing to an end. The focus and toil of a situation is replaced with elation and deep satisfaction, allowing for time to reflect on lessons learnt in order to bring the emotions to a satisfactory conclusion. The card also speaks of profit, awards, and blessings received or that a solution has been (or is soon to be) reached for a problem relating to the question asked. A time of blossoming creativity or the grasping of some truth is also represented here.

In general the Four of Scepters implies order, harmony, and obtaining a firm foundation. It is the culmination of something or the condensation of past events reaching a conclusion. Feelings of being settled, secure, and grounded are either forming or need to be encouraged and developed in order for the situation to be concluded. We are urged to learn lessons from the past, giving us a firmer foundation with which to understand the events of the present. In relationships this card represents a strong and beautiful symmetry and loving understanding. We can learn much about ourselves by recognizing our partner as the personification of the emotional image of the opposite sex within us. If we are feeling confused or restricted by a situation, this card can teach us to take a step back and look at the complete picture or to realize that every cycle must come to an end in order for a new cycle to begin. If we are facing difficult times or feeling tired of our labours, we can focus on the rewards that will come to us when this phase is complete.

Analysis & Symbolism

Here we find perfect balance between the active and inactive principles. It combines the energetic inspiration of Aries with the graceful beauty of Venus (Aries in Venus). This illustrates the original essence of fire crystallizing into form, creating the framework for nature's building blocks. This is more the structure of nature's laws and principles, which govern its activity, rather than physical matter itself. It also relates to the cycle of the seasons and the systems of creation. This structure is both active like a turning wheel and inactive in the sense that it is balanced and stable. Using these two processes in our own endeavors will unlock the fruition of projects and events in our lives. By structuring our creative inspiration into an overall system or frame, utilizing both our active energy and our skills of arrangement and gentle consolidation, we bring about the

crystallization of our ideas. Contradictions and opposites connect at the centre and unite.

The seed of the Two of Scepters has been planted in the Three and has now been conceived in the Four of Scepters. The principle of new beginnings and energy of Aries has been combined with the love and beauty of Venus. Before the new can arise, the old must be settled and complete, and conflict of opposites resolved. This clarification of the old and union of differences adds a ritual dimension to the card. The magic of fire is organized into a functional system through the celebration and adherence of the seasons, events, or anniversaries—this aspect also relates the card to ceremony. The painting shows a sensual female Vampyre in the act of ritual. She is centred and stimulated by the flame—her arms crossed as a sign of containment. She sits in the centre of a ritualistic circle of blood, symbolising both completeness and the phase in the cycle of life. The red blossoms and the candles relate to Venus and Aries, respectively.

Shadow

Incompletion. Breaking down of structures. Disharmony, chaos. Something unsettled or incomplete. Unreadiness or a lack of progress. Unreliable, insincere. Hasty or erratic. Disappointments and dissatisfaction. Lack of material success. Instability. Tension. Melancholy or lonely. Disrespect or blasphemy. Constriction or tiredness.

FIVE OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Leo in Saturn; Severity (Geburah) of Fire; Force of Spiritual Creativity

Kindred Spirits: Vahaviah; Yelayel

Essence

The Force of Will. Challenges and competition. Meeting trials. Ambition and self-determination, confidence. Rebellion, revolution. Command. Purification through fire. The power of evolution. Passion. Catharsis. Bursts of creative energy. Mastery through conflict. Guardianship, dedication to a cause. Breaking through resistance. Defiance.

Message

The Five of Scepters represents challenges and competition. When it appears, it is an indication that there are competitive elements in the situation we are asking about. We may be involved in a contest or a debate. Someone or something may be opposing us or challenging our position. We may have competitive rivals or someone may be scheming against us. Alternatively it may be that there are blockages or obstacles within ourselves that need to be dealt with in order for our energies to be released. Scepters represent our Will and the ability to express our personal spirit, desires, or creativity. By meeting challenges presented to us, we learn our own strengths and weaknesses, becoming stronger in our resolve and more sure of our beliefs. By facing difficult trials and tasks and overcoming them, we are rewarded with new skills that can later aid us in reaching our goals. These new skills are unique to the trial we have overcome and relate directly to the challenge. In this sense we see that each unique trial has its unique prize, and so contains that prize within itself. Passing through these trials is not merely about

picking ourselves up and dusting ourselves off to fight another day, but about shedding layers of our worn-out myths that are no longer needed, and gaining a talent, a new belief, which is unique to our individual spirit. The hardships we face create the gifts of spring, just as the seed needs the hard earth to push up against in order to flourish. Without our challenges, we would never flourish.

We should be aware that adversity and hardships make us stronger in order to break through into new light. Fear is irrational in nature and does not necessarily reflect the real situation, but rather reflects our most primitive worries. These are the deep, unfathomable, and often irrational instincts that the mind does not want to unravel, making the fear more of an obstacle to us than the actual situation itself (which we already have the skills and courage to deal with). We can use our creative imagination to help us accept the challenges of life and to transform them into knowledge and power—deep, dark, poetic, and beautiful. The gradual defeat of our fear sets free all the creative energies which have been bound up with our struggles of the past. This is a purification through fire by which our power is refined and our fears dissolved. The Five of Scepters may be telling us that we need to learn from past mistakes, use new approaches, or deal with the situation with calm resolve. Patience and perseverance are needed to accomplish our endeavors.

The Five of Scepters does not always characterize a major obstacle; often it relates to a series of minor frustrations. This card also stands for competition, whether in our professional or personal dealings or in our internal thoughts when weighing issues or opposing ideas. In each case this competition is about refinement and is ultimately for our growth and happiness.

Analysis & Symbolism

The card shows a seemingly vulnerable female and the totem animal of Scepters, the panther, opposing each other. Both are standing defiant, the panther ready to pounce and the girl employing the defensive power of her scepter to counter the attack. The Five of Scepters is the trump card of Leo, which symbolises a great strength obtained by the taming of fiery explosive energy. This force can then be employed towards asserting our Will, as it contains both the potency of fire and delicacy of water. In the Five of Scepters those two types of energy are not yet fully reconciled, creating an exchange of equal force against each other. At the same time these forces do contain some elements of each other. Astrologically the card refers to Leo in Saturn, meaning that the dynamic lust of Leo is held down by the slow and solid nature of Saturn. Like volcanic energy beneath a mountain, the fire builds in intensity until it bursts with explosive effect. The opposite effect is that the weight of Saturn buries the fire and extinguishes its power. These two opposing forces are represented by the panther and the girl.

The narrative of the image can be read in a number of ways, depending on the reading and the surrounding cards. The panther can represent the fiery passions held back and contained by the feminine qualities of passiveness and structure. The energy created, when balanced, is both passionate and compassionate. Like the card of Leo, Strength, it contains fiery creativity that is composed or structured. This makes the Five of Scepters a very noble card, representing a fight against injustice and a force that stands against oppression. Being hugely individualistic and sometimes idealistic, it is both forceful and solid in its resolve and self-belief. This makes it a metaphor for arguments, but if well balanced, it can be expressed as resolution rather than conflict.

The Five of Scepters has both the forceful change of Geburah and the willful energy of fire—both fiery in nature. This makes it

a potently active force, but the influence of Saturn tends to weigh it down and sometimes embitter it, which is why it relates to strife or struggle. Leo is the fire element at its most balanced, but here it is transformed into the more forceful power of the Fives. However, because its authority derives from Saturn, the card's irrational energy is tamed by that dampening influence. This benign and gentle influence of the feminine allows the card to display qualities of both boldness and kingly virtue. The buried fire gives it potent reserves of power and can be a symbol of purging through fire. The Five of Scepters also represents the awakening of the sexual drive and becoming conscious of our unique sexual energy. In general terms the card can force us into a confrontation that leads towards a new orientation of our external selfhood. This card can be a call to temper our actions or behaviour in order to resolve conflicts. It can also be a sign that we must stand up for our rights, but to achieve this through grounding our fiery energy in the stability of composure, thereby increasing the effect of our power.

Shadow

Strife, struggles, and conflict. Temper or moodiness. Antagonistic, contradictory. Recklessness. Disagreements or discord in terms of rights, justice, or desires. Misunderstandings or a lack of communication. Inner conflicts. Untamed passions. Disorganized. Being led astray. Restriction, frustration, or anger. Vanity. Blocked energy. Overwhelmed, disheartened.

SIX OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Jupiter in Leo; Beauty (Tiphareth) of Fire; Equilibrium of Spiritual Creativity
Kindred Spirits: Sitael; Almiah

Essence

The Equilibrium of Will. Victory. Triumph and success. Achievements. Pleasure gained through work or struggle, a breakthrough. A climax. Optimism. Courage to face trials. Self-belief and determination. Riches. Clarity and unification. Emotional warmth. Passion and compassion. New opportunities. Spiritual enlightenment.

Message

The Six of Scepters represents a magnificent victory or exhilarating self-esteem. It may indicate that victory is imminent or that now is the time for the final strike towards triumph. The card is about supreme optimism, which increases the certainty that our goals will be reached. New opportunities will appear in our lives, we will win a position or defeat an obstacle, or we may be granted rewards for the efforts of the past (the Five of Scepters). We feel good about our accomplishments and have reached a place where we obtain the prize. This Six represents spiritual Will reflected from the Everlasting and in equilibrium with all our other elements. We become the channel for this energy, which is in balance with our emotions, our intellect, our creativity, and our earthy existence. As it does not conflict, this energy can flow perfectly with our emotions, including our love for others, and our desire to strengthen and inspire them. In the same way it doesn't conflict with our earthly lives but invigorates our body with health and happiness.

In relationships this card signifies a successful union, overwhelming joy, and perfect poise. Emotions might be intense but are

governed by the benevolent passion of Leo and the good fortune of Jupiter. These bring wealth, light, love, and growing prosperity. The card also means victory after strife, promotion, reward, or public recognition. The resistance has been overcome, allowing for new possibilities, greater rewards, or exciting fields of duties. The Six of Scepters is also a symbol of magical creative power and the ability to fix our Will on a goal and follow it through with great skill. It characterizes a deep joy and belief in life and in the love and glory it presents us with. This energy is the stable force resulting from the connection of the Four and Five of Scepters. The fervent force of fire is received and reflected with the feminine qualities of conciliation and psychic sensitivity. Like the Sun, it is self-sufficient and all-encompassing. The Six of Scepters often appears when we have been working hard towards a goal and success is finally within reach. The recognition we have sought is now being granted. We are ready to trust our power and push forth into victory. It is time to stand up for our truth and assert ourselves by becoming aware of the fears that have prevented us from reaching our goal. It is time to banish these fears and step boldly into our victory.

Analysis & Symbolism

The deadly strike of a Vampyre makes a precise incision directly into the lifeblood. Here his lust is not merely hunger, but an exhilarating reunion with his most potent spiritual powers. He drinks from the spiritual stream of life at its most empowering, creative, and balanced point. He draws the Everlasting into the realm of human spirituality and self-realization. When doing a reading, it's useful to look at how a particular energy is progressing through a series of cards, forming a narrative of the ebb and flow of different energies in the reading. The energy of the Six of Scepters is triumph. The Three of Scepters is taking aim, the Four is centering and fortitude, and the Five is the effort needed to draw the

bow—the Six is the exhilaration of seeing our arrow striking the target. The Sixes of all the suits have a special place in the Tarot; they are unique in that they reflect Kether, and they represent the Everlasting echoed in human spirituality. They are in perfect equilibrium, balanced between the active and inactive, earth and spirit. They represent the heart of our psychic body, and like the Sun surrounded by the planets, they keep all our elements in perfect orbit. When we experience this centering in the suit of Specters, everything seems possible. Our Will triumphs as though it were divinely ordained.

Not only is this card about reaching our goals, but it also holds the certainty and essence of victory in desires as yet unmanifested. Just as the bowman knows with absolute certainty that the target is struck the split second he releases the arrow, this card urges us to draw from this energy of unquestionable success and self-confidence to achieve our desires. Rather than grim determination, this card is about the power and satisfaction we feel when we know that we will succeed. Astrologically this card represents the fortune and expansion of Jupiter in the passionate heat of Leo. It knows no sense of failure. Feelings of radiance and harmony characterize this card, as it also denotes the source and spirit of fire (Ace of Scepters) expanded within our human spirit—a reflection of the Everlasting bringing forth its creations. It can be viewed as the human soul fulfilling its divine calling, where all our elements unify and strengthen one another. The Vampyre pictured gazes with self-confidence and pride over his dominion, while the scepter hums with potent coordinated power. By his side we see the fierce panther fresh from a kill, electrifying triumph igniting its magnificence.

Shadow

Defeat. Dissatisfaction. Low self-esteem. Weak effort. Failure and loss. Disheartened, despondent, or demoralized. Arrogant, self-important,

or self-delusional. Presumption. Inferiority complex. False pride. Bullying and slander. Cowardice, bravado. Selfishness. Uncontrolled power or emotion. Strife. Obstacles. A lack of virtue.

SEVEN OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Mars in Leo; Victory (Netzach) of Fire; Absorption of Spiritual Creativity
Kindred Spirits: Mahashiah; Lelahel

Essence

The Absorption of Will. Valour. Defiance. Daring, taking risks. Attacking from a defensive position. Steadfast resistance. Tenacity. Bravery. Quick reactions. The power of regeneration. Rivals. Holding an immovable position. Convictions. Opposition. Defending our beliefs or actions. Expressing our own reality. Taking a stand.

Message

The Seven of Scepters denotes valour, a force that is both defiant and aggressive. It is a defensive attack and represents our fighting spirit. Its nature is one of daring and audacity, producing a countering force of undaunted resistance. We must take a risk in order for the battle to be won, and must fight tooth and nail with tenacity and fearlessness. The card also tells us that it is time to dare, to throw caution to the wind and take a leap of faith. The card also urges us to defend our position. We must express our personal stance in the situation with honesty and openness. A major theme of the Seven of Scepters is one of resistance; this could be against a rival or an opposing position, in defending our convictions, or in a rebellion against the external world. From an inner perspective, it can indicate that we need to stand against or resist thoughts or feelings that are dispersing our powers. In general it is about facing our

fears or facing and defeating our inner demons. The card implores us to rise above ourselves, to take a risk and trust our instincts, or to make one last stand. The victories won in the past have increased our powers, but now we face an obstacle or opponent that is equal to us in prowess or ability. Here we must condense all our reserves into a fist of determination and strike out or dig in our heels in order to resist an attack. This regenerating process expands our scope of power and self-belief beyond ourselves.

The valour expressed here is drawn from instinctive and intuitive responses; thus our victories greatly expand our growth and self-belief. By facing our fears and resisting an attack, addiction, or temptation, we are empowered, drawing the power of our enemy into ourselves. By not compromising we not only defeat a current attack but become better equipped to withstand future ones. Often the Seven of Scepters appears when we are disheartened or feel that our best is never good enough. Instead of resigning to a supposed fate, we must rise above ourselves in an act of daring, thereby achieving the breakthrough. In our occupation or endeavors, this card denotes conflict with opposing powers. It may be that we are tired and ready to give up on something—take a deep breath, take heart, stand defiant, and renew your resolve and efforts. When concerned with relationships, the card can indicate that obstacles or issues need to be overcome, that there is tension or defensive behaviour, or a harsh and hasty exchange. We must not let our frustrations get the better of us and should try to resolve underlying issues. Someone may be displaying one or more of this card's shadow aspects towards us, or someone may be questioning our motives—we should be sure of our position and confident that it is worth standing for. Do not give in to fear, as someone may be trying to threaten or scare or us into submission. Stay positive; hesitation will cost you the battle. The Seven of Scepters is all about taking a stand to block the energy flow pushing against

you. Usually we flow with our most natural energy or with events and feelings that carry us along without our conscious interference, though sometimes we want to resist or change course—the power of the Seven of Scepters makes this resistance possible.

Analysis & Symbolism

The feline Vampyress on the Seven of Scepters is engaged in battle. Whether she is attacking or defending is ambiguous, but in truth she is displaying a defensive attack. She screams defiantly at her unseen adversary, taking a firm hold, while being blasted with the voracity of the attack. Her whole body is shaken by the force of the energy against her, yet she remains strong. This concept of opposing forces and countering energies is an important aspect of the card. The Seven of Scepters depicts both attack and defence; one without the other would be a victory for one of the forces, but here the forces are equally matched, with horns locked. While the main message of the card is one of resilience, we should examine our position to be certain that we are not being rebellious without good cause. If we are involved in a struggle, we must question if the conflict is worth the energy needed to succeed. Will the outcome serve us or others, and is it important enough for us to fight for? Once we have confirmed this, nothing should deter us. We must stand steadfast with courage, tenacity, and aggressive resistance. The Vampyre here is endowed with the swift power and strength of a panther, the totem animal of Scepters in *Phantasmagoria*.

The Seven of Scepters can also indicate strong convictions. In order to take a firm stand, we must be confident in ourselves. We must use all our power to trust ourselves. If our motive is just, we should employ all the energy of this card to defeat our adversary. The war-like power of Mars combined with the boldness of Leo creates a force and impact that will win the battle, as well as increase fortitude in order to win the war or to take further risks. Because

this card is a Seven, the feminine quality of dispersion begins to appear (seven being the number of Venus). This implies a shift towards degeneration, although the solar power of Leo is at full potential, the energy is moving away from the balance of the Six of Scepters, so it employs the fighting spirit of Mars to support itself. This burst of fiery energy breaks deadlocks. The combination of assertiveness and dispelling illustrates the defensive yet fiery energy of the card—it represents a last stand and audacious persistence.

Shadow

Cowardice. Timidity, trepidation, or weakness. Indecisive, hesitant, or resigning because of fear or a lack of self-confidence. Ignorance, aggression, or bullying. Inflexibility, bigotry. Quarrelling or over-reactions. Threats. Obstinacy, stubbornness, or pretence. Losing faith or retreating. Lashing out in anger. Submission.

EIGHT OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Mercury in Sagittarius; Splendour (Hod) of Fire; Rhythm of Spiritual Creativity
Kindred Spirits: Nethahiah; Haayah

Essence

The Rhythm of Will. Swiftness. Rapid action, quick developments. High frequency. A grand finale. Motion, speed, and purpose. Receiving important messages. Problem solving. Intense flow of thoughts or creativity. Excitement. Travels and discoveries. Realization of a spiritual truth, clarity. Help and support from others.

Message

The message of the Eight of Scepters is rapid, direct action. Its aim is to overcome hindrance or misunderstanding. This energy is electric—a lightning rod of intense and sudden active power. It sets events in motion like a shock wave of activity. It may be that events or activities related to the question will suddenly intensify. We should prepare ourselves for this increased momentum because events can move so fast that we may find it difficult to catch up with them. However, it is important that we don't disrupt the flood of energy because we may alter its trajectory (that is, unless we want to change the direction). We should ride the wave and keep a clear vision of its conclusion. The card can be telling us that now is the time to make our move; having developed our idea or set our goal, we must now drive forward with rapid movement and directed energy.

In readings the card is sometimes a message that now is the time to declare ourselves, or to make our actions and motives clear. Alternatively, the card can be urging us to grasp an opportunity. Even though we are unsure of the outcome, we must take a deep breath and plunge into the rapids of the Everlasting. Perhaps there are things in our lives or in our inner thoughts or beliefs which are impeding the flow; now is the time to remove such obstacles from our path. All the elements are in place and are moving us towards our destination—in order to reach our goal we must not hesitate, and we must allow ourselves to be carried along with the quick flow of events. The Eight of Scepters sometime indicates that we are soon to meet people or situations which will increase the pace of our life. We may experience or read something enlightening, or a friend may help us find a solution which completely alters our perception or allows rapid progress in a situation. In reference to relationships, the card indicates a whirlwind romance, sudden and intense passion, or feelings of euphoria or lust.

Analysis & Symbolism

The painting shows a male Vampyre discharging a swift and deadly attack. All his fiery energy is condensed into the action and motion of his strike. Every muscle is coordinated into the momentum of his purpose, ready to explode with electrifying force. The scepter (representing his fiery willpower) has become a weapon of immense rapid force, illustrating the sudden impact of energy signified by this card. The smoldering Sun is a symbol of intense heat and creative power. He is bare-chested as an indication that the high velocity of the attack is not impeded by any needless hindrances, and that the power is direct and open, not defensive in any way. The arrow is the symbol of Sagittarius, which is the ruler of this card (along with the Nine and Ten of Scepters). The planet of communication, Mercury, is closely related to this card, which tells us that it is a card about messages. Mercury is the planet of the Magician and of Chokmah and relates here to channeling the message of the original Will (Ace of Scepters) into the sphere of our own energy. The force of the Eight of Scepters refers to speech, ideas, and communication at high velocity—a force like the rapid vibration of electricity and the activity of brainwaves. Recent scientific discoveries suggest that all material things are made up of vibrating particles of energy. The activity of this card can be likened to the electrical vibrations of atoms constituting matter. As all the Eights are relatively close to the bottom of the Tree of Life (physical manifestation), these vibrations are the energies that shape matter.

In the Eight of Scepters, the element of fire has been stabilized and has clarity. This is in the sense that they have maintained a vibration structure, and that the original idea or concept has found its frequency and rhythm. We can tap into this kind of energy to give form to our creativity and ideas, and to achieve our goals. This vibrational activity holds things together, not only the matter in the Universe, but the realities and activities in our lives. The card can

apply to memory formation and processing information or sudden flashes of inspiration. It can also indicate the arrival of news or information or any intense flow of thoughts or creativity, intellectual communication, or a dazzling idea.

Shadow

Slow progress or delays, a lack of activity. Hesitation, a time of waiting. Laziness and despondency. Lethargy, apathy. Hindrances. Neglect. Misunderstandings or lack of communication. Reluctance. Narrowness of vision or ideas. Superficiality. Rushing into a situation without thinking of the consequences. Theft.

NINE OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Moon in Sagittarius; Foundation (Yesod) of Fire; Crystallization of Spiritual Creativity
Kindred Spirits: Yerathel; Saahiah

Essence

The Crystallization of Will. Strength. Stamina and unshakable resolve. Adaptable. Realignment. Ambition. Defending ourselves and others. Achievements. Dedication. Inner strength and sincerity. The spiritual strength of a Holy Warrior. Foresight. Healing old wounds. Outwitting an adversary. Harmony of the conscious and unconscious.

Message

The Nine of Scepters signifies tremendous inner strength. It refers to unshakable resolve and the ability to replenish energy, but also great power. This is a type of strength which is flexible and can adapt to any situation. Because it is in constant motion—adjusting to any situation or attack—it is a potent force of stamina and defence. This strength has obtained its adaptability through experience and by learning from past conflicts. This adaptable force derives from an immense inner strength which lies in its ability to change perpetually. To be efficient, a defence needs to be fluid as well as strong—having flexibility as well as the stamina and determination to endure despite all obstacles. The Nine of Scepters characterizes a self-realization which dissolves inner feelings of dread or weakness and floods us with an inner strength, like the flow of blood spreading into every empty channel, invigorating us with vital energy. We feel this energy seeping into unknown areas of our being. This creates a harmony between our conscious desires and our unconscious powers, filling us with intense feelings of strength. In all areas of life, the Nine of Scepters represents stability through continuous transformation and sublime confidence.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Nine of Scepters represents the strength gained through uniting our conscious and unconscious energies. This sensual Vampyre is fluid and ethereal in her movements, which illustrates her connection to Moon power. All of the Nines live in the sphere of Yesod (the Moon) on the Tree of Life, and coupled by the fact that this card represents the Moon in Sagittarius, she is instilled with great amounts of lunar energy. Sagittarius is the most receptive of the fire signs, and so absorbs her lunar energy and invigorates it with creative inspiration. This union produces a powerful web of active and passive energy, igniting her scepter with strengthening energy. The secret unconscious energy (Moon) becomes manifest through the brilliant flame of the fire, awakening hidden powers. The message of the card is that change is stability, and stability is strength.

In readings, the Nine of Scepters can be a omen to proceed with care and be flexible. By using the skills learnt from past experiences

to strengthen our resolve, we can achieve anything. Our full potential is unfolding from a source of inner strength. This card urges us to continually press onwards no matter what obstacles are before us. Even if we feel it is an uphill struggle, we will succeed in due course. Within us are all the secret reserves of strength needed to overcome any difficulty. This card refers to a connection of masculine and feminine forces and so can indicate that we will discover our innermost emotional energy. It can also be a sign that we are soon to encounter our perfect partner, who reconnects us with our opposite male or female spirit. The flame of the Nine of Scepters impregnates the Divine Feminine, pushing deep into the realm of intuition where it reunites with its original source. This process is the assimilation of our Will into the unconscious, our creative power grounded in the deep mysteries of the Moon.

Shadow

Inflexible. Feeble, debilitated, or ineffective. Impotent or incapacitated. Feeling helpless and giving up. Lack of energy. Fragile, brittle. Fossilization. Expecting the worst. A waste of resources. Contradictions. A lack of composure. Inner blockages, inner weakness. Psychological injuries or paranoia.

TEN OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Saturn in Sagittarius; Kingdom (Malkuth) of Fire; Manifestation of Spiritual Creativity
Kindred Spirits: Reyayel; Umael

Essence

The Manifestation of Will. Pressure or resistance. Perseverance, self-determination. Diplomacy. Laboring. Trying to do too much. Exhaustion. Self-sacrifice and generosity. Structured growth. Mastery of life skills and multitasking. Order, justice. Being firm or taking responsibility. Self-empowerment. Boundaries. Revenge.

Message

The final numbered Scepter card is about resistance to oppressions or burdens. The energy here is one of determined persistence—gritting our teeth and getting on with the task ahead. The task can take any form: a long-term workload, a pressurized situation, or any barrier that impedes our progress, whether external or internal. We feel weighted down by responsibility or worry or are feeling demoralized. The Ten of Scepters represents phases in our life when we are overwhelmed and can find no time to relax. The card can be an indication that we are pushing ourselves or that our duties are all-consuming. We are being urged to take a short rest in order to reorganise and restructure our time and reignite our resolve. We may be being asked to take charge of something or to lead others from the front, shouldering the responsibilities. Even if our tasks are things that we enjoy, pressure, deadlines, or responsibilities can kill our enthusiasm. It is important to vary our activities or find space to re-establish our confidence. Just taking an hour to recover and relax can be enough to accomplish this and help us be more efficient in completing our duties. Focusing our vision on the completion of our tasks and the conclusion of our difficulties will inspire us to reinforce our efforts.

The Ten of Scepters suggests that life is going to be more demanding than usual for a period. We feel that we are fighting for each small gain and that each step is a struggle. We are urged here to ease our workload or to assert our position. Sometimes the card indicates that we should be firm and explain to others that the burdens placed on us are not acceptable or ask others to help us. Setting our boundaries and being steadfast in our position is the another message of the Ten of Scepters. We should not take on the burden

of other people's work or problems without careful consideration nor accept responsibilities that are too demanding for our current situation. Perhaps we need to renegotiate the terms of a contract or issues in a relationship or our professional life. This may include making our own compromises or rethinking what we can realistically achieve. In general we must take responsibility for ourselves and structure our activity so as to succeed as a whole, allowing time for pleasure and calm.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Vampyress is pushed up against the constricting oppression of the roots that imprison her. Her scepter is an arrow-headed spear (a symbol of Sagittarius), which she uses to counterattack the heavy resistance and burden of the earth (Saturn). The scepter sparks with the energy of her fire, which has condensed and intensified under the pressure holding her down. Her body shows the wounds of the fight, yet her hair flows deep and burnished like the lust of blood. She attempts to raise herself up beyond the briars with steely determination, her expression one of intense concentration. Her victory is foretold by the blazing of the spearhead, where a tremendous fiery energy has built up. This energy becomes the foundation of power that fills her with aggressive blazing force, making her even more determined to succeed.

The Ten of Scepters illustrates Saturn in the sign of Sagittarius, the most adaptable of the fire signs. Being ethereal, luminous, nimble, and elusive, it is almost crushed by the slow, inflexible weight of Saturn. The swift fire has lost its nobility and is being suffocated by the oppression of worries, fears, or burdens. The fire's creative power and fiery energy is blocked. When this process enters our lives, we cannot develop our creative impulses and we long for tranquility and enjoyment. The card is a reminder that although a problem or work is weighing us down in the present, our efforts

will be realized and rewarded in the future. Once the burden is conquered, our fire energy (willpower and spiritual drive) transforms into the power and dominance of the Two of Scepters as the cycle of the element's energy continues.

Each of the Tens are seated in the sphere of Malkuth on the Tree of Life—this means they function on a purely earthly level. The force of the Tens is largely detached from its spiritual source and is not in direct intercourse with the preceding powers. They are the elements at their most materialistic and are largely uninfluenced by the energies from which they originate. At the same time, they contain within themselves all the aspects of the previous cards at a fixed position. In this case we are presented with the materialization of fire and the original spirit of fire (Ace of Scepters) made manifest in the physical world. The "grounding" of this fire energy has great potential for stabilizing us. It can teach us to withdraw from illusory perceptions, irrational ideology, or overly sentimental emotions.

On a psychological level the Ten of Scepters can teach us to free ourselves from irrational fears, rigid morals, or self-delusions. It can help us get things into perspective and recognize that many of our limitations are self-imposed. These are psychological barriers used to protect us from feelings of rejection, condemnation, or fear, which we then project out onto the external world. By facing our fears, we will gradually realize that they are not outside of us and out of our control, but internal and controllable. When we repress our instinctive passions through our fears of rejection, our personal vitality is suffocated. This is particular evident for those who have felt deep rejection or oppression in childhood. This condensed energy can then sometimes burst out as aggression or be internalized as feelings of depression and lack of self-worth. We are inspired here to transform our condensed energy into radiant self-determination and explosive creativity.

Shadow

Oppression. Heavy burdens. Never having time to relax. Taking on too much. Not fulfilling duties and responsibilities. An unpleasant duty. Doing everything the hard way. Repressed feelings. Blocked energy. Defeat. Cancelled plans. Self-delusion. Overly sentimental. Pressure or great strain. Malice, injustice, or repression.

THE LORD OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Fiery aspect of Fire

Kindred Spirits: Seven of Grails; Eight of Scepters; Nine of Scepters

Essence

Active and dynamic willpower. Forceful. Creative. Willful. Bold. Confident. Enthusiastic. Determined. Active. Powerful. Assertive. Fierce. Sudden. Expansive. Magnetic. Authoritative. A leader. Charismatic. Generous. Original. Energetic. Self-determined. Confident. Audacious. Pioneering. Enterprising.

Message & Quality

The Lord of Scepters is forceful in pursuit of his desires and goals. He is assertive, bold, and self-assured. He characterizes the positive energy of fire, which is direct, dynamic, and active. He combines vitality and self-determination with an innovative nature, making him a lightning rod of inspiration. His daring and charismatic personality makes him a perfect leader and gives him the authority of command. He is powerful, honourable, optimistic, clever, and enthusiastic. His energy is projected forth like a flaming arrow, and his steed of expansive force propels him towards his goals with deadly accuracy and unwavering confidence. The Lord of Scepters is an extrovert, thrusting his desires and personal Will out into the world. Sometimes this spectacular energy can be fierce or explosive, and it is often expressed in short and rapid bursts of activity. This aspect often results in dazzling inspiration, ideas, or tactics of brilliance or burning passion. He is proud and strong, an organizer, a pioneer, a ruler—the one who activates and directs the abilities of others. Often he is the centre of attention and is the one to leaps into a situation with daring and a keen sense of purpose. He is intensely creative and never settles for old approaches, preferring to do things with originality. This Lord is the archetypical trailblazer or explorer, venturing into unexplored territories. As a warrior he has the courage to face his enemies as well as life's challenges. He fights boldly for others or for his own convictions, sometimes with dramatic or violent force. Idealistic by nature, he always strives to better himself or situations around him.

The Lord of Scepters can also represent divine inspiration and good news or advice. He is the creator who utilizes his personal potential and power by identifying with his own inner image as the creator god.

Shadow

Impetuous. Provocative. Intolerant. Harsh. Egotistic. Bigoted. Domineering. Oppressive. Volatile. Combustible. Aggressive. Violent. Despotic. Cruel. Brutal. Tyrannical. Megalomaniac.

THE QUEEN OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Watery aspect of Fire
Kindred Spirits: Ten of Grails; Two of Scepters; Three of Scepters

Essence

Receptive and reflective willpower. Passionate. Desired. Commanding. Magnetic attraction. Appealing. Sexual. Erotic. Visionary. Adaptability. Steady command. Warmth. Love. Kindness. Social. Vibrant. Transforming. Healthy. Optimistic. Captivating. Energetic. Self-determined. Independent. Influential. Enchanting. Compassionate.

Message & Quality

The Queen of Scepters is self-confident and enthusiastic in her passions. She has a magnetic attraction, being both sensual and self-determined. While her Lord's fire is focused outwardly, her fire energy is turned inward and is seated in the emotions. Because of her commanding sexual appeal, she has many admirers and is captivating in her radiance. It is she who controls and demands the emotions of her suitors, and she is the archetypical seductress. Her beguiling smile and erotic instincts attract and influence the desires, emotions, and actions of others. The Queen of Scepters is also relaxed, sociable, self-assured, and graceful. Her enthusiasm and exuberance is infectious. Her power is the feminine expression of fire—visionary, adaptable, and transforming, yet strong-willed, proud, and with inner vitality. She is secure in her strength and power. This Queen can also be extremely compassionate and loving, applying her dedication and commitment to the emotional health of others. She is positive, creative, and independent, a source of inspiration and a muse, with a vibrancy that is absorbing. She has tremendous belief in her own capabilities and powers, knowing that she can achieve anything she sets her mind to.

On an inner level she represents the creative instincts and passions of the Will to assert itself in the material world. She is the vision with which we can see the sensual and vibrant creativity beneath the mask of matter. Her calling is to unite the elements of fire and water in order to manifest her very own image of the world.

Shadow

Compulsive. Temperamental. Impatient. Obstinate. Manipulative. Intimidating. Narcissistic. Vengeful. Jealous. Inconsiderate. Deceitful. Conceited. Critical. Submissive. Obsequious.

THE PRINCE OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Airy aspect of Fire
Kindred Spirits: Four of Grails; Five of Scepters; Six of Scepters

Essence

Swift and perceptive willpower. Aspiring. Inspired. Artistic. Enthusiastic. Enterprising. Adventurous. Swift. Spontaneous. Heroic. Idealistic. Conviction. Joyful. Energetic. Extravagant. Lustful. Generous. Trustworthy. Cunning. Intuitive. Perceptive. Resolute. Abundant. Flamboyant. Self-reliant. Optimistic. Charming. Romantic.

Message & Quality

The Prince of Scepters blazes with passion and inspiration towards the fulfillment of his lusts and aspirations. He bursts with energy and life, enthusiastic, high-spirited, and impassioned. His fiery hunger for adventure consumes any fear that would cause others to delay. His impulsive and vigorous disposition means that he always dares to go where others fear to tread. He is never afraid to experience new things or conquer greater heights of adventure, creativity,

or sensation. He will forcefully pursue his passions with explosive enthusiasm and reach for all the excesses in life with youthful exhilaration. The Prince of Scepters combines a heroic courage with an intense passion which is almost delirious in nature—the result being an empowering feeling of ecstasy. He always battles against the odds, ever optimistic, ever triumphant. This Prince of fire is insatiable and irresistible, seductive, lustful, and a master of sexual glamour. He is the charmer, the male enchanter, flaming with spontaneous desire. He can direct this blazing flow of creativity through his artistic genius, and by surrendering to love, he rises above himself, illuminated with the joy of life. Although the Prince of Scepters is impulsive and loves to take risks, his energy is skillfully directed. He is idealistic, resolute, and likes to express his opinions.

He is traditionally called the Seeker and represents the part of us which desires something and wants it immediately. In relationships this presents itself as inflamed romantic love or wild passion. From an intellectual perspective, the Prince of Scepters is our active thoughts and the ability to see all sides of argument, even if they contradict each other. By questioning and exploring all possibilities, we build a creative thoughtmap that is both active and dynamic.

Shadow

Unpredictable. Fickle. Reckless. Irresponsible. Restless. Impatient. Boasting. Arrogant. Brooding. Moody. Superficial. Insensitive. Thoughtless. Angry. Violent. Destructive. Fanatical.

THE DAUGHTER OF SCEPTERS

Alchemy: Earthy aspect of Fire; Regulates Cancer, Leo, and Virgo
Kindred Spirits: Ace of Scepters; The Rose of the Palace of Fire

Essence

Steady and secure willpower. Enthused. Stimulating. Optimistic. Impulsive. Revitalized. Imaginative. Arousing. Exciting. Expectant. Consuming. Instinctive. Lively. Beguiling. Bewitching. Enticing. Carefree. Enriching. Animated. Self-assured. Thrilling. Individualistic. Curious. Exotic. Delightful. Fanciful. Beautiful. Imaginative. Bountiful.

Message & Quality

The Daughter of Scepters is infused with optimism, all doubt is vanquished, and she is animated with revitalizing expectancy. She is effervescent, thrilled by the exciting glow of new energy stirring within her. The promise of shimmering creativity and new beginnings has been realized within her. Having drunk from the enriching lifeblood, she now is feeling the first arousal of rejuvenation. Hot drops of blood intoxicate the deep earth from which she has emerged, dispelling all doubts and past fears. The Daughter of Scepters is shameless in her bewitching enthusiasm and openness. She gives herself up completely to the instinctive inspirations that begin to seep into her deepest being. She is characterized by her ecstatic anticipation and self-evident splendour. Her nature is one of richness, passion, and sexual charisma, displaying emotional extroversion and magnetic eroticism. She possesses an inner fire of childlike self-assurance and delight that beguiles all who encounter her. Her inner emotions are all-consuming, bountiful, and fathomless and are expressed wholeheartedly. Her sexual charm mesmerizes, while she remains oblivious to those who are enraptured by

her. Her personality is displayed by her independence, high energy, and light-hearted abandon, often resulting in daring or risky behaviour.

The Daughter of Scepters can indicate the first spark of creativity, a message or letter, an enticing new encounter, a dazzling idea or thrilling revelation. On a personal level she can signify the release from long-held fears or doubts, and a renewed feeling of joy, wonder, and new possibly. Spiritually she symbolises the dynamic and creative Will of the Ace of Scepters, channeled through the other Court Cards of Scepters and manifested in our earthly sphere, materializing in our everyday experiences and self-realization.

Shadow

Uninspired. Bored. Indifferent. Uncommitted. Superficial. Faithless. Theatrical. Impetuous. Irrational. Unstable. Insecure. Vulnerable. Dissatisfied. Vengeful. Frustration. Self-absorbed.

ACE OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Origin of the Water signs; Crown (Kether) of Water; Essence of Emotional Intuition

Kindred Spirits: The Daughter of Grails

Essence

The Essence of Emotion. The depths of feeling, intuitive emotions. Intimacy or spiritual love. Fertility, beauty, pleasure, and happiness. Intuition, empathy. Pure emotion and harmony. Psychic awareness. Sympathy, kindness, and parental love. Idealism, romance. Receptive, forgiving, and self-sacrificing. Pure, virginal.

Message

The Ace of Grails represents deep feelings and heightened intuition or emotional sensitivity. When this card appears it is a sign that we are, or should be, attuned to our deepest feelings of compassion and emotional awareness. As the essence of emotions, the card is the invisible seed of our most profound unconscious feelings. These intuitive vibrations are largely outside of our conscious awareness and originate in the hidden depths of our soul. They are instinctive emotions that inspire empathy with others and with the longings of our own hearts. These stirrings come directly from a source of divine love. The card can indicate that we must be sympathetic towards another and treat others with kindness and affection. As the Aces are from a very ethereal place, the emotion here is very deep but very gentle at the same time. We should employ gentle grace to support and inspire others. By passing on the love we receive from the Everlasting, we become the channel for the most universal energy that holds everything together: the energy of love.

The Ace of Grails asks us how we can offer this love for the benefit and healing of others. The message of this card is that the

answer to our question is contained in love. These emotions aren't just romantic love (although they are the foundation of romance); instead it is a deep affection and an empathic connection of feelings. It can be seen in the feelings of a protective father towards his child, the intuitive love of a mother for her baby, or the mutual affection and understanding found with family. This energy also has a very natural and embracing quality, as it can be expressed through love and kindness towards a stranger. When this Ace appears, look to connect with others, set aside selfishness, and express feelings openly. Relating to social activities and profession, the card reflects great satisfaction and pleasure. It relates to helping and aiding others; this could be in any field, but particularly within healing, nurturing, and teaching. A purposefulness of action that brings satisfaction from aiding others is also indicated, as well as a connection to the arts and expressing our feelings. In relationships the card means true love or spontaneously falling in love. Also the profound joy of mature love, security, trust, mutual kindness, and caring.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Ace cards hold all the small cards of their suit within themselves as potential. The Ace of Grails is the root and essence of emotion and intuition. It expresses its element of water in its most secret and original form and is the feminine counterpart of the masculine Ace of Scepters. It is therefore the Holy Grail to the Holy Scepter—the vessel which makes itself available for the coming together of heaven and earth, and the cup for the blood created from mixing fire and water. The fundamental message of this card is that we should allow love to consume all things. By surrendering to compassion, we are transformed in the act of giving and receive love from the Everlasting, which continually flows into us from limitless radiant happiness. The green roses symbolise emotion and are a reminder that the fragrance of roses floats equally

for everyone. This fragrance is light and gentle in its quiet ecstasy, penetrating into the depths of the soul.

The Ace of Grails is related to self-expression and artistic communication of our feelings, exploring our unconscious, meditation, and a gentle beauty that longs for union with the mysteries of love. The card has a mystical quality, urging us to seek oneness, sympathetic vibrations, and inner attunement with spiritual intuition. As Grails are the suit of the heart, action and activity that comes from the heart—such as painting, poetry, and dance—can enhance and refine the energy contained in the card. Serenity, grace, and tranquility are the gifts of the Ace of Grails, resulting from emotions in harmony with universal love. Another important aspect of this Ace is deep intuition and the subtle messages it whispers from our unconscious. These messages can speak to us through dreams, heightened feelings, divination, and the Tarot itself. We can channel these messages by attuning ourselves to this ethereal voice through meditation, visualization, and creativity. When we are sensitive to the subtle energy of this card, we find that there is a synchronicity between our emotions and the events in our everyday lives.

In readings the card encourages us to trust our deeper feelings. It can foretell the beginnings of a romance, a spiritual lesson, emotional healing, or the start of an exciting emotional adventure. It can be the start of a new love of self and inner harmony expressed through our emotions—as clear and light as water. A oneness and love of nature, animals, and our environment is also symbolised here, along with a fondness for our memories, excitement for the future, and a renewed physical sensuality.

Shadow

Fear of being rejected, hurt, or disappointed in love. Emotional instability, anger, frustration, and feelings of unease. Loneliness, emotional emptiness, and desperation. Negative emotions, harshness, or

malice. Unhappiness, emotional exhaustion. Loss of a loved one. Lack of grace, kindness, or artistic inspiration. Vague or irrational.

TWO OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Venus in Cancer; Wisdom (Chokmah) of Water; Energy of Emotional Intuition
Kindred Spirits: Ayael; Chavuyah

Essence

The Energy of Emotion. Receptive love. The harmony of polarities. Romance. Allure and captivation. Emotional exchange. Agreement, compatibility. Courtship, marriage. Sensual pleasure. Balance and symmetry. Acceptance. Truce. Self-denial. Friendship. Solidarity, kinship, and equality. The Vampyre Kiss of love and death.

Message

The message of the Two of Grails is the union of opposites through love or affiliation. It relates to an intense, radiating joy, experienced through the reunion of polarities. When this card appears, it most often is speaking of love between two people. These two people's feelings vibrate in sympathetic harmony from the depths of their hearts. The exhilaration felt is mutual and each accepts and charms the other in perfect balance. This is characterized by deep emotional exchange, giving and receiving affection and overflowing love energy. Emotional riches, delight, and tranquil euphoria lead to inner renewal for both—born from loving acceptance and mutual surrender. We must surrender to love, let go of our fears, and unfold to love, no longer condensed in the self. This also applies to our need to open ourselves to the loving acceptance of the world around us and to the Everlasting. We must learn to love ourselves and our unique qualities. Self-love is not an egotistical arrogance

but a deep appreciation and joyful affection for all that we are and will be. This quality prepares us to offer ourselves completely to another. It also helps us to appreciate and respect the unique beauty of someone else.

Not only is the Two of Grails about love, it also symbolises the union of any two forces. These could include professional or artistic collaboration, friendship, and kinship or the binding of ideas, skills, or concepts. When the card appears in a reading, seek out connections and balance ideas, emotion, talents, or energies to create a strong bond or interaction. Create something new, or if you are faced by two choices, reconcile them and find common ground. Symbiosis is the key to the Two of Grails. This can imply a truce, agreement, or a compromise. We may need to form a union through mutual understanding or forgiveness. This card also symbolises enticement, love charms or potions, and glamour.

Analysis & Symbolism

This card is the initial manifestation of the water element. The Ace is purely the invisible essence or potential of emotion. All the Twos are related to Chokmah on the Tree of Life, which is our expansive, creative energy. The Twos are always actively seeking new possibilities and horizons and are the spark of revelation, inspiration, or divine insight. In the realm of emotions (Grails), it presents itself as the spark of love or inspired feeling. It represents active and creative emotions that can radically change our world in an instant. Therefore the energy of water is at its most exalted in the Two of Grails—symbolising emotion, activity, love, and spiritual Will.

We see a romantic couple in moonlight beside a fountain. The zodiacal alchemy of the card is Venus in Cancer—both the planet and the astrological sign are closely related to the Moon, giving the card an ethereal and mysterious quality. The figures are enchanted

and entranced by each other, and the exchange of blood via the Vampyre's Kiss seals them in eternal union. This is a kiss of both love and death—love in the sense that they hunger to unite, and death in the sense that they sacrifice their egos in order for the union to take place. This binding of opposites represents the harmony of male and female forces. It is also a *re*union because the card symbolises the recovery of a single entity that has divided after its original oneness (seen in the Ace of Grails). This return to wholeness illustrates the mutual longing of lovers to embrace their counterpart, who holds the missing part of their soul.

This concept can also apply on a personal or psychological level, teaching us that to become truly whole we must embrace opposites within ourselves and accept both "male" and "female" aspects of our true personality. On the spiritual plane, this can refer to a marriage of our earthly and spiritual natures. The emotions of the Ace are no longer directionless and satisfied from within, but are directed externally towards our heart's desire. In the painting the combining of opposites is reflected in the grail and candle in the foreground, whose colours of red (fire) and green (water) are integrated through the red blood and green flame. The fountain symbolises the eternal flow of divine love, which issues from the chimera statue of combined elements. This creature possesses aspects of the four totem beasts of *Phantasmagoria* and is also featured in the astrological trump of Cancer, the Chariot.

Shadow

Dis-union. Inner discord. A need to make a bond of love or to forgive. Parting of ways. Arguments. Loveless, emotionless, or unfeeling. Insensitivity, selfishness, or egotism. Disloyalty, betrayal. Disharmony, separation. Alienation. Conflict, quarrels, distrust, or disillusion. Conflict of interest. Jealousy. Adultery.

THREE OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Mercury in Cancer; Understanding (Binah) of Water; Development of Emotional Intuition
Kindred Spirits: Raahel; Yebemiah

Essence

The Development of Emotion. Abundance. Fulfillment, gratification. Celebration. Exuberance. Plenty, good fortune. Generosity. Close friendships. Openness. Festivities. The realization of a dream. Social integration. Spiritual gatherings. Workshops, support groups, and communities. Conception, procreation, and inner growth.

Message

The third card of the suit of Grails depicts the joys resulting from emotional nurturing and fulfillment. We are urged to embrace the simple joys of life and to welcome the love and support of others. The card stands for simple yet sublime pleasures that touch the depths of our hearts. When the Three of Grails appears, it is a sign of intimate feelings, that we are deeply touched by the kindness of another, or that we have gifts to offer others. It is the pleasure of being loved and returning love. The card can indicate that we must offer support, affection, love, or artistic talents to others. It may be that we should express our love for someone who is close to us, for a stranger, or for all life surrounding us. Healing and teaching is also symbolised here. The card is related to close friendships, groups with a shared interest, or those who celebrate or support each other. Often when this card appears it refers to a particular person in our lives—a friend, family member, companion, or partner. The Three of Grails is a also a calling for us to embrace life inwardly and externally and give unexpected gifts of joy or pleasure, whether to those we love or people we meet, or take time to express appreciation

of someone's unique qualities in an intimate and kind-hearted way. The card has a sublime and mysterious energy about it, which can be expressed through secret gifts of love, love letters, and tantalizing surprises. By becoming a channel for divine love, we share in the bliss of the moment, and the world around us takes on a new positivity that calms us. The card can be telling us to support and inspire others through guidance, encouragement, or the use of our artistic skills. The creativity expressed in the card is spontaneous and energized, a dance of delight or sensual passion. We are urged also to accept the gifts and friendship of others, to share in their joys and celebrate their happiness.

In general terms the Three of Grails is teaching us to open fully to the bliss of life until our hearts are overflowing into the hearts of others. In our professional lives the card symbolises teamwork, collaboration, and creative interaction or participation. On a personal level it is our inner streams propelling us to external success. The Three of Grails can denote that we are soon to receive a bounty or treasure and is a sign of plenty. These treasures are often the reward for past endeavours or actions, which only adds to the enjoyment because they are well deserved. In love the card represents openness, intimate communication, and the development of feelings, as well as passion, desire, and sensual vitality.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Five of Grails shows three Vampyres sharing blood from the deep cauldron of life. The sweet red nectar is abundant and overflowing, a delicious, tantalizing richness that unites them in spiritual sensuality. This union between ourselves and life—or between our inner and outer experience—is the message here. The Vampyre lady to the right is returning the blood to the cauldron from her chalice, illustrating the eternal circle of life energy. To the bottom of the picture the roses bloom in sublime colours, while at the top

we see the mysterious Mask of Grails. The male Vampyre is embraced in the sensuality of femininity that is the spiraling serpent, symbolising the development of passion and desire. He gazes out into the vast sea of possibilities (Binah) and watches his ship returning with plentiful treasures. The Three of Grails is the counterpart to the Three of Scepters, which shows this ship setting off in search of fulfillment.

Binah is the sphere of all the Minor cards numbered Three, and it symbolises the universal laws at work in the world and in life. Binah understands the workings of fate and how all events are woven together in a vast cosmic plan. It is thought of as the primordial feminine energy, the Supernal Mother of the Universe which receives the energy of Chokmah (the Twos), cooling and nourishing it into the multitudinous forms present throughout the cosmos. This card expresses the divine power of growth and the development of love—our desires have come to fruition, and a sublime bliss brings us true inner fulfillment. Astrologically the Three of Grails is signified by Mercury in Cancer. Mercury is the planet of the Will and of guidance and communication, while Cancer is the receptive watery sign of emotion and intuition, ruled by the Moon. This mysterious combination speaks of the masculine Will descending into and igniting the vast sea of possibilities, characterized by the feminine.

Shadow

Dissatisfaction, despondency, or feeling unfulfilled. Poverty or emptiness. Waste of resources or unrequited love. Discontentment, dejection, or disillusionment. Suspicion, mistrust. Isolation. Being left out. Parting of friends. Loss or lack of companionship. End of festivities. Intemperance, greed, excess, or drunkenness. Raw lust without emotion.

FOUR OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Moon in Cancer; Mercy (Chesed) of Water; Structure of Emotional Intuition

Kindred Spirits: Hayayel; Mumiah

Essence

The Structure of Emotion. Luxury. Emotional affluence. Comfort. Indulgence or extravagance. Sustained period of happiness. Passive sensual pleasure. Emotional strength and balance. Introspection. Individuality. Restoring emotional security. Spiritual activities. Protective and caring tenderness. Mesmerized or absorbed. Domestication.

Message

The Four of Grails represents luxury or contentment. Because the suit of Grails is concerned with feelings, this card refers primarily to emotional luxury but can include pleasures gained from affluence. We have reached a stable, comfortable point in a situation or in life. Our emotional strength or that of others is key in understanding the present situation. The card speaks of a balance and condensation of feelings or of a pleasure that is both secure and sensual. We have been fulfilled and are enjoying the luxury of indulgence, absorbed in our feelings of gratification. When the Four of Grails appears in a reading, it can be a call for us to enjoy the pleasure of the moment, gain nourishment from our prosperity, and revel in extravagance. Depending on the surrounding cards, we could be being warned not to overindulge to the point of dissipation or to become so lost in excess that we lose perspective. If we are too satisfied or comfortable, we are in danger of losing our drive and sinking into apathy or idleness. It could be that a situation or relationship has become too solidified and we are urged to create new experiences or be more adventurous. If relating to a particular issue or circumstance, the card

can be warning us to be more resourceful and not allow things to stagnate due to apathy.

The Four of Grails is symbolic of passive pleasure and contentment. On a personal level it can relate to a need to draw into ourselves and rebalance our emotions. This type of luxury is one of self-absorbed bliss or calm and peaceful introspection. We may find ourselves day-dreaming or lost in the flow of thoughts and feeling. The card can be encouraging us to indulge in these periods of inner emotions in order to still our hearts and find stability. Meditation and relaxation can help us attain a deep inner peace and a reconnection with our feelings and individuality. We may be lost in the moment, reminiscing, or engrossed in something—perhaps a work of art or relaxing activity—and we are advised to enjoy the present moment with renewed clarity. Sometimes the Four of Grails is calling us to retire after a time of stress and indulge in simple pleasures of life, or that a time of reflection and renewal of self is needed and now is the time to dream and muse. If we are feeling apathetic or overstimulated, the card urges us to temper our behaviour, as we must not become dependent on riches or emotional indulgence but remain stable and thankful. This card also relates to motherhood—the soft merging of nurturing love between a mother and baby, where the child is lost in the luxury of nourishment and the mother in the pleasure of unimaginable love. In relationships the card implies tenderness, emotional stability, peace, and security as well as the intimate merging of sensual lovers. In general terms the Four of Grails represents fermentation through richness towards the germination of deeper emotions or inner spiritual truths.

Analysis & Symbolism

The grail has become an incense burner—the intense energies of emotions have condensed and are now billowing into intoxicating perfume. The base of this burner features a statue of the chimerical

beast of the Chariot, relating to the consolidation of the four elements. In the foreground we see a Vampyre feeding from the rich blood of the female—he is inebriated by the elixir, which nourishes and satisfies. His victim swoons with the self-sacrificing act of giving up her lifeblood, absorbed in the sensual pleasure and yet listless in her submissive abandon. The alchemy of the Four of Grails combines the Moon and Cancer, both lunar symbols and both receptive and illusory in nature. This reminds us of the dreamy and licentious emotions that characterize this card. It is only stable because of its resignation, whether towards excess, luxury, or apathy. The card warns us that too much of a good thing can ferment into a poison, condensing emotions into either chilling cravings or feverish abandonment. A loss of purity, debauchery, or stagnation can result if we fail to moderate our passions or hunger with spiritual clarity. The card symbolises enticement, possession, submission to sexual intoxication, emotional entanglements, or being lost in hallucinations. The card may appear if someone is feeding off of our emotions, which can be an act of self-sacrifice or, if in shadow, can be a drain on our energies that needs to be addressed.

Shadow

Contempt. Restlessness. Drug abuse. Debauchery. Self-gratification. Laziness. Chasing after money or luxury. Materialism. Apathy. Self-involvement. Losing interest. Poison or stagnation. Listlessness. Cravings. Mediocrity, boredom. Romantic ideals that disconnect us from reality. Drinking the well dry.

FIVE OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Mars in Scorpio; Severity (Geburah) of Water; Force of Emotional Intuition

Kindred Spirits: Luvayah; Phaheliah

Essence

The Force of Emotion. Maturing of emotions. Strengthening and deepening feelings. Trials of the heart leading to awakening. Reflection of the shadow. Stagnation. Widening of perception. Decline. Disappointment. Triumph of matter over spirit. Endings leading to new beginnings. Dispelling phantoms.

Message

The Five of Grails represents a phase in our lives or an aspect within the question relating to loss or disappointment. The loss is one which profoundly affects our emotions. This loss is not necessarily negative; it can relate to the loss or separation from something that was holding us back. It may be the loss of a poisonous habit or relationship, or the separation from any situation hindering our growth. As the card relates to our emotions, it involves the difficult process of letting go of the past in order to make room for the future. Change is always hard for us, especially when feelings are involved. The Five of Grails encourages us to set our sights on new horizons and understand that we need to shed old skins for new things to develop. Sometimes the card relates to a deep feeling of separation from something or someone we love, whether through parting or loss—our task is to accept the parting with grace and faith in the future. We may need to pass through a time of mourning in which we absorb the pain of our loss and transform it into treasured memories and thankfulness for that which we have parted from. We will soon begin to rejoice again at what we have, and at

the gifts and lessons we gained from that which we lost. Difficult trials in our lives empower our heart; we learn from our mistakes and gather deeper understanding of our feelings and the feelings of those around us.

The Five of Grails helps us to let go of past hurts by incorporating them into our experience as the dark and beautiful poetry of the soul. Just as winter is the hope of spring, so we must recognize the potential for rebirth through our sadness. Depending on adjacent cards in the reading, the Five of Grails will either be telling us to seek a time of solitude and reflection or to seek the empathy and advice of a friend or advisor. In general the card represents a need to balance emotions and to detach ourselves from harmful habits, addictions, or situations. We must learn to see not only what we would like to see, but all that is really there. We must learn that our heartache is a reflection of our internal longing and that we have the skills to quench this longing. Perhaps we are being taught that it is time to move on, cease self-pity, and replace negative reflections with positive desires. This keeps the heartache from being the fulfillment of unconscious negative wishes. In our work or home life this card can indicate a failed project, an unfulfilled hope, or the loss of a job, position, or home. This loss may contain both happiness and sadness, as with moving to a new home. The card can signal the ending of a friendship or relationship, or just a temporary parting. On an inner level it can characterize a period of emotional evolution or the need to put aside old behaviour.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Five of Grails is a lament, an elegy, a requiem. It is the sad reflection on that which has seeped away and returned to the unfathomable waters of eternity. The female serpent Vampyre gazes mournfully into the past, focused on what has been lost. From her grail the last drops of blood drip into the pond—but this blood had become venom, for in the background we see the broken fountain from which it was drawn. The blood from this fountain has congealed and petrified, all its nourishment dried up and exhausted. The petrifying power of water relates to the alchemical process of fermentation, the foundation for the germination of new life. The stagnation that began in the previous card has poisoned the blood and so must be released. This card relates to Mars (Severity) in Scorpio (Death) and is situated at the end of autumn, just before the year descends into winter—denoting triumph of matter over spirit, symbolised by the reversed pentagram. The self-absorbing feminine energy of water has reached a point in which it is in danger drowning in itself, and so the active force of Mars has blocked further dissolution. This can result in the hardening of inner emotion or the need to break from unrealistic hopes and fantasy. Allowing the natural process of draining away toxic blood is the path to ultimate salvation. In the pond we see the reflection of the girl, face looking up hauntingly, as if beneath the water. This is a symbol of illusory fears as a reflection of our shadow—facing our reflections and dispelling our inner phantoms.

Shadow

Disappointment and loss. Mourning or deep sorrow. Emotional wounds and feelings of rejection. Lost hope and disenchantment. Anticlimax, unfulfilled expectations, and dissatisfaction. Heartache. Dejection, melancholy. Being let down or treated unfairly. Self-pity or melodrama. Bitterness. Infertility. Venom. Treachery. Regret.

SIX OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Sun in Scorpio; Beauty (Tiphareth) of Water; Equilibrium of Emotional Intuition
Kindred Spirits: Nelakhel; Yeyayel

Essence

The Equilibrium of Emotion. Wish fulfillment. Beauty. Gifts, blessings. Magical delight, bliss. Innocent joy of childhood. Gentle, kind, and generous. Carefree, patient, warm. Deep pleasure. Emotional and creative richness. Soft, erotic sensuality and passion. Inner world of dreams, fantasy. Baptism. Angels. Pure virtue. The Holy Grail.

Message

The Six of Grails is one of the most positive and beautiful cards in the Tarot. It is about the perfect enjoyment of life and a blissful inner harmony. Emotional and sensual pleasures are raised to the very height of pure delight. The card indicates that rich and pleasurable feelings are being, or are soon to be, experienced. Good times, blessings, and an appreciation of simple joys are all contained here. This is pleasure in harmony with the natural flow of our higher being and brings us deep feelings of well-being. There is no effort needed, no overstimulated passions, no negative emotions... just pure satisfaction in the present moment. Our wish is to be granted. The Six of Grails has a noble and kind-hearted impulse, so it can relate to the gaining or receiving of a gift or affection. We could be asked to offer our affection and warmth to someone, or to see the goodness in others. We should be generous with our emotions, helping others and offering our talents. Acts of gentle kindness and giving inspiration are represented here, reflecting an inner connection with the pure light of life. The card is related to innocence. Though a lack of guilt and honest simplicity are implied, it is also

the innocence of purity of being—a natural creativity direct from the heart, free of ulterior motives.

The Six of Grails displays the same delight and simplicity seen in children, encouraging us to look to children for inspiration. The card characterizes openness and carefree enthusiasm. In the present situation, we should endeavor to engage these qualities. The card reminds us of happy childhood memories and nostalgia, including daydreaming about past feelings of warmth and contentment. In a reading this card can refer to a youth or child or can be a call to relive a past pleasurable experience. We may have a reminder or encounter a person or feeling from the past. The Six of Grails is not a passive energy but one of vibrancy and a willingness to try new things. We may be being urged to take a risk, possibly one connected with emotions, or to seek a renewal of faith and open ourselves to pleasure. By returning to these inner sources of magic, we perceive everything in a new, radiant light. This is where true fulfillment lies, rather than in the hungry gratification of raw desires. The Six of Grails signifies that our encounters, endeavours, work, or leisure will be pleasurable or satisfying. In love the card indicates fulfillment of the sensual Will, balance and harmony of feelings, sexual charisma, and deep emotional satisfaction.

Analysis & Symbolism

Balance has returned to the suit of Grails after the disappointment of the Five. All the Sixes characterize their element in its most perfect form within our human experience; they are placed at the very centre of the Tree of Life and are ruled by the Sun. Like the planets in harmony around the Sun, the elements are in equilibrium around and within the Sixes. This makes the Six of Grails the card of perfect emotion, where we encounter the rebirth of the emotions after the loss of the previous card. This is the new life that arose from the petrification of emotions—the letting go that leads

to death and refreshing rebirth. The Sixes are reflections of their Ace, the divine essence made manifest in the human spirit. This allows the spiritual essence to be experienced in our own consciousness and everyday lives. The young Vampyre offers her grail full to the brim with the nectar of life. It is not dried up (Five of Grails) or overflowing into intoxication (Seven of Grails) but is perfectly satisfying. While the previous card denotes stagnation and the next excess, here the element of water has regained its natural rhythm. Here we are directed to give ourselves up to the joys of our own emotional nature. We each have our individual path towards perfect emotional happiness and so should follow our own heart rather than a preconceived belief or popular image of gratification.

The beautiful girl is symbolic of an encounter with the eternal feminine, who entices us into the depth of inner beauty. The card refers to the scorpion illuminated by the Sun, whose light infuses the mysterious the deep waters. Her unconscious sexual power attracts everything masculine, giving birth to the original creative Will in limitless sensuality (the serpent). This anointment allows for balanced growth in all areas. In a spiritual sphere, the Six of Grails signals an awakening to the Beloved—that part of us which is in direct contact with the Everlasting. Our vitality is rekindled and our senses stimulated, the world takes on a new beauty as we see the consciousness of light in all things. The card stands for deep emotional truth and sensual pleasure.

Shadow

Discomfort. Sullen, uninspired. Emotional unease or imprisonment. Seeking emotional safety. Attachment to the past which halts movement. Vanity. Guilt or corruption. Emotional instability. Bad memories. Longing for protection. Torment or nightmares. Holding a grudge. Impurity. An overly romanticized view of a situation.

SEVEN OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Venus in Scorpio; Victory (Netzach) of Water; Absorption of Emotional Intuition

Kindred Spirits: Melohel; Chahaviah

Essence

The Absorption of Emotion. Indulgence. Sensual lust. Intense creative imagination. Excess or high activity. Giving up control. Adventure. Visions. Illusion, or enchantments. Hunger and craving. Satiety. Debauchery. Desire. Elusive. Dissipation. Deception. False dreams. Dispersion or chaos. Degeneration.

Message

This card tells us to take hold of our dreams and indulge in sensual desires. It relates to exploring fantasy, the imagination, and our unconscious. We are encouraged to reach for our fantasies and let go of rationality and control, allowing ourselves to merge with our inner streams of intoxication. Creativity, passion, and sexuality are all indicated by the Seven of Grails. The card is also a call for us to divert from the safe path and explore new experiences, stimulate our senses, and indulge in deep ecstasy. In a reading the card can imply that we should bring our fantasies to life; this could include creativity, pushing our own boundaries, or setting out on new adventures. Often it refers to a need to relax our control, yield to a situation, or give ourselves up to passion or desire. Perhaps we need to just go with the flow and let ourselves be taken along with a situation that stimulates us but which has been holding back. In this case we should release our tension and trust our instincts. The Seven of Grails tempts us to take a bite of the forbidden fruit. Something tantalizing appears in our lives, or our fantasies are soon to become a reality—we must prepare ourselves by being both careful and

bold. It is important that we are aware of the intensity of the situation and hold firmly to a foundation. Often when this card appears we are faced with many choices or enticing options, so it is important to think about our choice with a clear head and be certain that it is correct, or that it is not merely an illusion. If we are certain of our direction and motives, then we must commit to realizing our dream, dispel hesitation, and make our fantasy a reality.

The Seven of Grails can appear at a time when our fantasies or desires are being fulfilled and can indicate that it is time to take stock of the situation, and perhaps moderate our behaviour. The danger of this card is that this type of intense pleasure is limited; it cannot be maintained constantly, and can lose its appeal if overdone, or can turn into unfulfilled cravings. If unchecked, it can distill into venom and poison us with addictions or degenerate into empty delusion. The thrilling stimulation that something once ignited in us can become a prison of delusion wherein we crave stimulation but are never satisfied. This not only applies to addictions but in more general terms illustrates that something is in danger of dissipating into meaninglessness, and that we should rebalance our emotions about an issue. Whether the question relates to work, relationships, or a particular situation, the message of the Seven of Grails is twofold: first, it presents a need to stimulate our imagination, passions, or activities if things are feeling rigid or stale. Or perhaps a need to energize our sensuality towards the seductive sweetness of life or towards the intense (yet transitory) joy we are experiencing. Second, it can illustrate the need to overcome distractions of fantasy. Are we running after illusions? Indulging so much that it makes us sick or confused? Perhaps we are making a mistake by being seduced by something that is an illusion. If so, a clear head and re-centering is needed. The card urges us to look at the reality of a situation or release ourselves from confusion. The Seven of Grails can also warn us that someone (maybe even ourselves) may be deceiving us.

Analysis & Symbolism

This snake-haired siren has gathered the blood of her victims in her bowl of desire. The potent fluid swirls hypnotically, revealing fantastic and intoxicating visions of bizarre hallucinations. This is a symbol of the intense creative wellspring of our unconscious that entices and mesmerizes us with its images and messages. This spring can be a deep source of inspiration for our creative expression, as well as a tantalizing peek into the realm of shadows. This realm of shadows is further illustrated by the entrance into the Underworld behind her. Its ghostly green light both entices and repels us. The whole picture exudes a heavy atmosphere of intoxication and seduction—but also of delusion and delirium. The water snakes in her hair represent both sensual luxury and confusion; the bowl of rich blood depicts a ghastly phantom. The imagery is deceptive—is the Vampyress vibrant with the sensuality of fulfilled desire, or is she sinking into the mire of false pleasure? The energy of the Seven of Grails is elusive—there is nothing to grasp, all is an illusion, so the question must be, is this illusion positive or negative? Are we hiding from the facts, not wanting to see the truth?

She is the siren-song of seduction and unfulfilled cravings, representing our deep longing to return to blissful submergence in the womb. The yearning for nurturing and freedom from struggle or responsibility, immersed in the sensual depths of the womb. The longing for boundless bliss can drive us to seek our happiness and motivate us to seek spiritual tranquility, leading to a satisfying life. However, when this yearning does not inspire us to further development, it can cause us to seek exaggerated forms of gratification or a regress into a self-absorption that consumes rather than supports. Even though her Grail is full, she is not satisfied and resorts to drawing venom from the serpent to add to the potency of the brew. Like Scorpio, which rules this card, the message is that when we balance disappointment (Five of Grails) and dissipation

(Seven of Grails), then a transformation into deep pleasure (the Six of Cups) is the result. Intense passion and sensuality can balance the loss felt in the Five of Grails, lifting us from depression towards true and perfect pleasure. At the same time we can enjoy the beautiful fantasies, wonders, and seductions that life offers us.

Shadow

A flight from reality. Disorganized. Unsatisfied cravings. False promises. Embarrassment. Sickness. False pleasures. Drunkenness. Wantonness. Fornication. Selfishness. Passionless lust. Lies and deception. Drug addiction and poison. Delusion. Hostility towards reality. Depravity. Delirium. Sexual violence. Repressing our shadows.

EIGHT OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Saturn in Pisces; Splendour (Hod) of Water; Rhythm of Emotional Intuition
Kindred Spirits: Vuliah; Yelahiah

Essence

The Rhythm of Emotion. Reunification. Letting go and moving on. Spiritual quest seeking the truth. Abandonment. Self-denial. Search for true fulfillment. Crisis leading to renewal. Inner journeying. Seclusion. Inactivity. Conquering addiction. Heeding warnings. Seeking help. A change of plans. Suffocation. Congestion. Fasting.

Message

The Eight of Grails is all about moving away from a hopeless situation. It represents the beginnings of the destruction of a stagnant situation through crisis. This is characterized by a descent into our inner being, a time of deep reflection and journeying into the depths

of our emotions. The card advises that we begin a spell of inactivity or seclusion in order to process our feelings and heal from a difficult emotional issue. The potent energy of the previous card has used up all our resources and we are now in a position where we have to trust our inner voice. The Eight of Grails often refers to a time of letting go of past hurts and moving on in a new direction. The situation has become hopeless and we must either reinvigorate it or move away so we don't stagnate further. The card can be a call to believe in ourselves and in our personal inner qualities. We must set ourselves aside, perhaps rising above a suffocating situation and realigning ourselves on our own path. The card relates to a time of looking for answers at a point where our progress has halted. Perhaps we are feeling restricted or suffocated by a person or situation, especially one that has dominated our thoughts and emotions. This card is also about abandonment, either of a congested issue, circumstance, or dilemma, or of past patterns of behaviour.

The Eight of Grails is an omen of an inevitable ending. It is time to realize that the past is gone, a chapter has ended, and what was once true is true no longer. The card can relate to the ending of a task or job that had become dull, of a lifeless relationship, or of our own stagnant belief structure. This does not necessarily mean a separation, but that things have reached a state where the old needs to be wiped away and replaced by the new. The card relates to endings or great changes—moving from a home, the end of a relationship, the completion of a project that has drained our energy, or a renewed search for happiness and understanding. You should re-examine your life, because murky vapours have made your way unclear and you are in need of clarity. It can be that someone or something has been draining your emotional energies or that you have been wasting your effort—someone or something is just not responding. We may feel that we have been sucked dry or our reserves of power are very weak. Perhaps someone has been bleeding

our energy for their own gain. Now is the time to reclaim your power, consider yourself, and no longer allow others to use deceit and emotional lies to control you. Whether it is a person or a situation, the card is telling us that we have been distracted by fantasy or illusion. Set limits and withdraw energy from anything that is a drain on your resources, whether emotionally or financially, or a drain on your time or health.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Vampyre Lord has fallen from grace. He wanders alone through the toxic vapours of resignation, beginning his journey towards reunification with his higher self. The land has become a stagnant mire of suffocating mists. The waters (emotions) of the Grail cards have congealed into venomous fog. The previous card has sucked all his life energy, leaving him lost and poverty stricken. All hopes and freedom abandoned, he has now become a beggar. At a deeper level this begging is an act of prayer; when we feel fettered and are in our deepest need, we turn to a higher source for help or inspiration. This is the nature of the Eight of Grails: that we have reached such a low state that we must abandon all effort and completely change our path or behaviour. It symbolises a search for real, meaningful truth and a rejection of the mundane goals and deadened perceptions of the masses. We are urged to take a more profound path, one which begins in the recognition of our own unique spirit and our higher self. The moving on from past structures and walking away from the old path is illustrated by the track leading from the ruined cathedral. This ruin represents the contamination of the past or a sanctuary that has been poisoned. The Vampyre Lord wears a mask (allowing him to walk through the poisonous gas of unconscious fears) and a crown. The crown can be viewed in two ways: either as a clinging to past glories and emotional riches that have stagnated, or as symbol of future glories and reunification with the Everlasting

after a time of painful wanderings—a return to our rightful throne as Lord of our inner kingdom. When we release our anxieties and tensions, we return to the still, clear waters of the perfect present moment.

Astrologically the Eight of Grails refers to Saturn in Pisces. The passive and mutable nature of Pisces has been dampened by the solid weight of Saturn, creating thick and foul mists that cloud clarity. Saturn is so suffocating here that all energy is like a virus to the emotions—a Dark Night of the Soul. There seems to be no hope that morning will dawn again. This loss of hope leaves us with no option but to abandon our struggle and surrender to God. Our shadows loom over us like the demon behind the figure, offering a bowl of malignant regrets. We are in need of fresh water and are no longer satisfied by the ruins of the past. A spiritual awakening is soon to occur, when we realize that part of us has been asleep all our life. Sometimes the card can represent austerity, fasting, or a willingness to suffer in order to evolve spiritually. Ultimately the Eight of Grails is a search for happiness (the Nine of Grails) and moving away from unhappiness. This can involve moving away from a relationship, situation, or perception that is keeping us from happiness. It can signal the abandonment of drama, events, or negative situations that are suffocating our feelings of well-being. Spiritually it relates to finding purpose and meaning in life through seclusion. Turning away from false feelings, dull routines, or empty worldly pleasures. Hear and follow the voice of your soul.

Shadow

Indolence. Restlessness or hopelessness. Worries. Submission. Congestion. Toxic emotions or poisonous atmosphere. Stagnation, contamination. Corruption, laziness. Anxiety or depression. Abandonment. Begging or poverty. Pollution, environmental crisis. Viruses or disease. Suicidal tendencies. Emotional breakdown. Suffocation.

NINE OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Jupiter in Pisces; Foundation (Yesod) of Water; Crystallization of Emotional Intuition
Kindred Spirits: Saaliah; Eriel

Essence

The Crystallization of Emotion. Luxurious happiness. Contentment. Emotional and material fulfillment. Optimism. Goodness and compassion. Sharing. Faith. Finding the higher purpose of life. Selflessness, redemption. Spiritual love. Enlightenment. Appreciation. Health. Accomplishment. Love of the Everlasting.

Message

The ninth Grail card represents perfect natural happiness and earthly blessings. It denotes deep inner satisfaction and emotional fulfillment, as well as belief in and love of creation and our place within it. We merge with the light-filled river of all life, where all forms flow together in oneness and beauty. The life, colours, sounds, and scents of the natural world shimmer through our senses, uniting us with the beauty of earthly existence. The Nine of Grails represents the happiness and contentment that arises when our dreams, wishes, or hopes are fulfilled, so we can be assured that contentment and blessings are on their way. It is also a symbol of the crystallizing of the love of the Divine within us and a quest for higher spiritual ideals, rather than a desire for gratification. When this card appears it is a sign that our wish is soon to be granted in a natural and sublime way. Good fortune and comfort are combined, resulting in success, abundance, and tranquility. In a reading the Nine of Grails signifies that the situation or issue will soon be resolved and that things are working towards a happy conclusion. Feelings of peace and plenty are characterized by the Nine of Grails; this could mean emotional

tranquility, the satisfactory completion of an endeavor, or material gain. It represents the enjoyment of our duties or activities and deep pleasure in relationships. Often it denotes finding a perfect partner who fulfills the longing for spiritual union in our life and within ourselves.

The card is identified by its virtues of kindness and compassion. It can foretell the arrival of a gift or of an encounter with someone who inspires us to live in the moment or to find happiness in a difficult situation. We might be encouraged to share our blessings, kindness, or insight with another, or called to aid someone in finding their own path to happiness. The happiness of the Nine of Grails is one of perfect contentment, a pleasure that flows directly from the Everlasting, bringing us complete emotional fulfillment.

Analysis & Symbolism

The male and female Vampyres embrace in sublime union. They share their inner abundance of spiritualized love in complete symmetry, encompassed in the crystal light of the opulent Moon. All the Nines are related to the Moon, representing the crystallization of the original essence of their elements and the foundation for their eventual materialization in the Tens. The Nine of Grails is ruled by Pisces, which is represented by the Moon card of the Major Arcana—this gives the card even more of a lunar quality. It is the crystallization of feelings into the foundation of life. The influence of Jupiter creates a motion of expansion to this energy, resulting in overflowing emotional delight and sensuality. Jupiter also stabilizes the element, making this card the most complete and generous manifestation of water (emotion). As it is positioned just above the physical manifestation of Malkuth on the Tree of Life, it appears as the elixir of the gods, poured like crystal nectar into our bodies and life experiences. The stability of the emotion has been re-established in perfect balance and luxury. In the background we

see that the grail has become a chalice of green flame, symbolising the binding of fire and water—not represented as blood, but as the energetic form of the masculine coloured by the feminine. This depicts the masculine in its devotion to the feminine emotions and lunar energies.

This divine nectar has impregnated our consciousness and has become a channel for the love of the Everlasting—our inner joy overflowing and nourishing those around us. This nourishment is symbolised in the card by the apples, also a symbol of health and earthly riches. In Norse mythology, the world tree Yggdrasil contained the apples of rebirth in its uppermost branches, and these nourished the gods and gave them eternal existence. These apples could only be cultivated and gathered by one purest in heart. This task was given to the goddess Iduna, known as the Renewing One. The resemblance of her nature and her name to the Garden of Eden is clear. The Nine of Grails shares the qualities and symbolism of this paradise on earth. The card is also associated with the crystallization of an emotional concept or the germination of a seed, as depicted by the green rose held against the womb of the female.

Shadow

Sadness. Unease. Discomfort. Discontentment or dissatisfaction. Self-complacency, vanity, or arrogance. Conceit. Foolishness. A lack of humility. Greed or the hoarding of reserves. Graceless, mean, or selfish. Ingratitude and a lack of appreciation. Limited rewards for efforts. Wastefulness. Unfulfilled wishes.

TEN OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Mars in Pisces; Kingdom (Malkuth) of Water; Manifestation of Emotional Intuition
Kindred Spirits: Esheliah; Mayahel

Essence

The Manifestation of Emotion. Emotional wholeness and harmony. Home and family. Settlement. An end of tensions and hostilities. Prosperity or self-esteem. Lasting success. Luscious, succulent warmth. Establishment of inner emotional kingdom. Honour, virtue, and patience. Productivity. Consistency. Affinity. Emotional clarity.

Message

The Ten of Grails represents lasting happiness, success, and emotional wealth. It symbolises deep fulfillment and stability in our emotional world. Tranquility, peace of mind, and long-term contentment characterize this card. In the previous card, we encountered spiritualized love and euphoria; here that energy has manifested in our actual material environment and been realized in our conscious being. This implies a perfect happiness in our home life and a calm serenity and inner peace. This card relates more to our practical life and our more conscious feelings, presenting us with a secure foundation for our emotions. In a reading the Ten of Grails represents a time of emotional stability, warmth, and tender sentiments. Often it relates to our home life or family and brings the promise of a lasting contentment in a loving environment. Happiness and prosperity are on the horizon, leading to enduring joy and success.

The card can indicate an end to emotional tensions or conflicts, either with others or within our own heart. As this perfect happiness is inspired from above, it touches us at the deepest level. This inner blissfulness is reflected in our external world, either as a

sharing of love with those close to us or in a new perception of the world. It is as though we have awoken from an eternal sleep—everything is bathed in a new light of warm tranquility and radiance. When we are filled with this light we radiate its quality. The Ten of Grails encourages us to pass on our feelings of peace and serenity to those around us, or to someone indicated in the question or the reading. This feeling that everything is perfect in the immediate moment is a consistent gentle flow of emotion—rather than a series of revelations, it is characterized by a relaxed ambience and natural tranquility. We are encouraged to realign our feelings with the qualities and vibrations of the card: if we are feeling overly emotional, we must still our hearts until a feeling of peace and warmth is achieved; if we are feeling uninspired, we should stimulate our emotional vibrations. We will know when we have achieved a closer rhythm with this spiritual energy when we begin to feel a euphoric sense of tranquility. The card can be an indication that we should be patient and allow things to develop naturally. In more general terms the card symbolises great success, self-esteem, or fulfillment. In love or relationships it represents long-lasting affection, emotional security, warmth, and bliss.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Ten of Grails represents the euphoric enjoyment of the succulent beauty of life. While the previous card symbolises a moment of ecstasy, this card is more about a consistent, long-term peace and emotional fulfillment. A sensual Vampyre reclines against a wall of white roses—she dips her fingers into a goblet overflowing with luscious lifeblood. She savours the rich fluid as its energy awakens her senses. The roses are a symbol of beauty in nature, while her Moon pendant relates the card to Pisces. The card is very much about satisfaction, especially on an emotional level. Completion and manifestation of the original Ace of Grails has been achieved

in our earthly sphere, representing the achievement of long-term goals making us truly happy. The work has been completed and now all the potential powers of our emotions are available to us. Our inner soul has settled in the dreaming of Pisces and is purified and directed by the willpower of Mars (Mars in Pisces). Expressions of affection, sentiment, and love bring illuminating joy and peace.

On an inner level the Ten of Grails can symbolise an emotional awakening of our soul and feelings of inner completion. The image is related to the story of Sleeping Beauty as she awakens from dream sleep. The Princess Briar Rose pricks her finger on a cursed spindle and sleeps for a hundred years. As she dreams in her enchanted sleep, her castle is overgrown with briars. Many suitors attempt to rescue her from her prison of sleep but fail, until the Prince, her one True Love, rides up on his silver stallion, kisses her, and offers her a rose upon her waking; they are married before the year's end. Not just a tale of eternal romance, the story also illustrates an encounter with the higher self on a personal level, and its eternal promise of self-realization, the blossoming thorn, and the eventual curse turned to joy. The Princess can represent our earthly existence and our longing for spiritual awakening. She is woken and enlightened by the kiss of her Prince, who returns her from the material plane where we are often restless and asleep to the spirit reality of the world around us. Our view of the world as purely material is shaken apart by a realization that every atom in the Universe is embedded with a deeper meaning, a divinity that communicates with us directly and unfolds itself for us.

Our task is to listen and awaken, to ask, and to recognize that events and encounters appear in our everyday life from a divinity that is at the centre of each one of us, and that it is merely the barriers we place around us to keep us feeling safe and in control that cause us to feel separate. We must come to know that our thoughts and creativity are connected directly to that which manifests in our

lives. What we think we know about the world is often an illusion of dream sleep. The Prince symbolises the love of God, of the Everlasting. If we have faith and trust, knowing that this love is eternal and unconditional, our need to control events would be replaced with the depths of emotional contentment.

Shadow

Discontentment. Disillusionment. Unease or worry. Dissatisfaction. Strife, restriction, conflict, or disruption. A negative atmosphere. Arguments and quarreling. Antisocial. Impatience. Languor. Lethargy. Procrastination. Deterioration or disturbance. Impetuous. Tormented emotions. Agitation or displeasure. Anxiety.

THE LORD OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Fiery aspect of Water
Kindred Spirits: Seven of Knives; Eight of Grails; Nine of Grails

Essence

Active and dynamic emotion. Intuitive. Mysterious. Intoxicating. Transcendental. Emancipating. Visionary. Enlightened. Spiritual. Redemptive. Evocative. Renunciation. Soulful. Merciful. Understanding. Healing. Paternal. Self-sacrifice. Inner absorption. Dreaming. Idealistic. Profound. Illuminated. Graceful.

Message & Quality

The Lord of Grails has an intuitive understanding that derives from inner enlightenment He is sensual, intangible, and mysterious. He characterizes the positive energy of water, which is dynamic and potent in its force. The swiftness and potency of his spiritualized emotions, combined with his visionary insight, make him a powerful enchanter and mystical teacher. His intoxicating imagination and poetic inspiration allows him to transcend the realm of matter and unite with his higher self. As a channel between the fire of the conscious ego and the watery unconscious emotions, he is able to shape the essence of reality to his own image. He is elusive, seductive, ambiguous, and profound—qualities that allow him to explore his own inner mysteries. These mysteries are often dark and testing, but his fluid nature allow the Lord to absorb their esoteric meanings and powers into himself without harm. He has an enticing eroticism about him, both sultry and sinister. He can be deeply sensual and romantic or sometimes hedonistic in behaviour. He is a master of inducement and witchcraft. These intuitive skills means that he can shape-shift, transforming into and absorbing any energy he desires. He is often immensely enigmatic and has tremendous empathy, making him a healer, artist, or teacher of the inner mysteries. In contrast to the Lord of Scepters, who projects his Will onto others, the Lord of Grails sucks in and absorbs the energies of people and essences outside of him. The severed snake-haired head he holds as a trophy symbolises his power to steal the energies of his enemies and use it as his own. The decapitated head is also a metaphor for his power and control over his emotions and lower instincts, renouncing and countering any powers of seduction used against him. This re-establishes his own powers of enchantment and energizes his masculine libido. On an inner spiritual level, this renouncement is directed towards our own ego, which we sacrifice to our unconscious in order to allow the higher self to shape reality on our behalf. The ego is transformed into the current of the Everlasting, symbolised by the grail containing the blood, which is the result of a union between of fire and water. A balance between the striving Will and inner intuition, developing the powers of the unconscious.

Shadow

Misunderstanding. Illusion. Self-delusion. Haughty. Irrational. Indolent. Addictive. Chaotic. Idle. Un-enduring. Untruthful. Melancholy. Lamenting. Self-pity. Treachery. Insanity.

THE QUEEN OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Watery aspect of Water
Kindred Spirits: Ten of Knives; Two of Grails; Three of Grails

Essence

Receptive and reflective emotion. Ethereal. Illusion. Mirroring. Sympathetic. Unfathomable. Virginal. Purity. Subtlety. Imagination. Unconscious. Introspective. Mysterious. Beautiful. Nurturing. Healing. Loving. Demure. Muse. Hypnotic. Ambiguous. Patient. Calm. Sensual. Delicate. Emotional. Romantic. Oracle or medium.

Message & Quality

The Queen of Scepters is introspective, ethereal, and unfathomable in her emotions. She is ambiguous and infinitely subtle in nature; she reflects the nature of those around her. Being virginal and pure, she is hypersensitive and receptive to any influence, mirroring others' emotions and essences so exactly that anyone gazing into her eyes sees only their own reflection. She is the eternally unattainable muse. She slumbers in her own mysterious dreaming and delicate inner tranquility. She is sensitive to the whisper of the slightest breath or the faintest memory lingering in her cup of blood. She is hypnotic and clandestine, wistful, elusive, dreamlike, and beautiful. She possesses potent occult power, having the ability of telepathy and mediumship. She is the deep-seeing oracle who relates messages from the spirit realm and the dead. Her immeasurable

spiritual and emotional empathy make her a prophetess and a channel for dreams, imagination, and inspiration. The Queen of Grails has an infinite capability for sympathy; not only does this make her a skilled healer, but it means that she absorbs every feeling around her, becoming the essence of it. In this sense she is herself empty—a vessel for any energy that she encounters. She is especially affected by any cards that are touching her in a reading. To see the truth of her is almost impossible. Her instinctive sensitivity and inner perception derive from the subtle web of the invisible unconscious, allowing her to see the quintessence beneath the external. She can sense any stirring in the collective unconscious and dream reality.

Within ourselves the Queen of Grails can represent the erasing of boundaries between dream and reality and the removing of all limitations. At times of tranquility or deep meditation, we allow the invisible, delicate flow of the unconscious to flow into us, heal us, and whisper messages directly from our higher self. This mesmerizing descent into dream and fantasy (or into nothingness) can be strange and confusing and cannot be understood intellectually. Yet it can purify the soul and result in emotions of bliss, when the unquenchable longing for the Everlasting is satisfied by a feeling of deep spiritual love for ourselves, others, and the natural world around us.

Shadow

Vagueness. Confusion. Fear. Nightmares. Chaos. Self-hatred. Irrational. Distortion. Moodiness. Turmoil. Hallucinations. Mirage. Delusion. Phantasms. Deceit. Trickery. Poison or venom.

THE PRINCE OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Airy aspect of Water
Kindred Spirits: Four of Knives; Five of Grails; Six of Grails

Essence

Swift and perceptive emotion. Secretive. Intimate. Intrinsic. Profound. Complicated. Enigmatic. Elegant. Charming. Decadent. Romantic. Poetic. Artful. Chimerical. Cunning. Crafty. Perceptive. Intricate. Sexual longing. Whimsical. Wishful. Intense. Liberal. Fanciful. Chivalrous. Impassioned. Sensual. Emancipated. Affluent.

Message & Quality

The Prince of Grails is secretive and esoteric in nature, profound in his feelings and presenting a calm demeanor. His sensual charm and poetic intensity give him a dignified air of splendour. Beneath the surface of this elegance simmers an impassioned decadence and sexual potency. He is shrewd, cunning, and artful, with an ingenious and intrinsic perception. Because of his enigmatic nature he can enchant and entice with potent effect—he is the chimera who is a master of illusion and fantasy. His individuality and innovative intelligence set him apart as a resourceful and powerful psychic Vampyre—strategic, subtle, and brilliant. Beneath his suave disposition, the Prince of Grails is an impassioned master of seduction, utilizing his guile to influence the emotions of others with deadly effect. He is characterized by his secretive nature, which is not only that he may hide in the shadows, but that he presents a particular ambience only in order to hide his true ambitions. This makes him an enigma, obscure and often incomprehensible. For example, he can appear both whimsical and intense at the same time, because he combines the energies of his Lord and Queen—the result being ecstasy. This implies that his true motivation is a longing for sexual

love, romance, and artistic fulfillment. In the pursuit of these he is wholehearted, warm, and intimate in his affections.

Spiritually the Prince of Grails stands for the balance between the active ego and inactive unconscious aspects of our emotions. We express ourselves creatively using our willpower to face the challenges of life while keeping in tune with the unconscious realm of the unfathomable without sinking into trap of illusion. This equilibrium allows the authority of the ego to be guided unconsciously by our higher self.

Shadow

Temperamental. Melodramatic. Volatile. Fierce. Merciless. Wicked. Ruthless. Deceitful. Devious. Chilling. Fiendish. Villainous. Selfish. Critical. Craving. Naivety. Fickle. Unfaithful. Corrupt.

THE DAUGHTER OF GRAILS

Alchemy: Earthy aspect of Water; Regulates Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius
Kindred Spirits: Ace of Grails; The Lotus of the Palace of the Floods

Essence

Steady and secure emotion. Crystallization. Rapture. Luminous. Gentleness. Grace. Glamour. Fantasy. Tranquil. Luxurious. Blissful. Sweetness. Imaginary. Fanciful. Adorable. Arousing. Captivating. Beautiful. Bewitching. Fluid. Illusion. Yearning. Virginal. Pure. Childlike. Innocence. Freedom. Joy. Effervescent. Wonder.

Message & Quality

The Daughter of Grails is the shimmering crystal that dances in light over the waters. She is bewitching, beautiful, and dreamlike—an

aphrodisiac and an enchantment. She has sated her thirst from the grail of blood, which has crystallized into her essence, scintillating and fermenting, flooding her body with tranquil rapture. Her inner emotions are luminous and effervescent, contained and secure in a gentle grace, resulting in a shimmering feeling of blissfulness. The Daughter of Grails is a virgin priestess, skilled in the occult arts of glamour and dream-fantasy. Her nature is one of soft longing, a yearning that is the crystallization of love and beauty. She creates mirage and illusion with a fluid dance of fanciful imagination, silently and effortlessly bringing dreams to life. Her watery creativity flourishes from her inner powers of creation and nourishes all her desires. These desires are often mere whims, which she wonders at and lets shimmer through her without the desire to capture them.

Because of her delicacy and innocence, the Daughter of Grails is unaware of her powers of seduction, enticing and captivating her victims—who adore that very innocence and worship her—while she drinks their blood. She is unrequited love, untouchable, unattainable—yet she stirs the passions of others with haunting longings. Her irresistible beauty is one of transparency, sweetness, and natural inner exhilaration. She is sensual and provocative, enchantment and seduction, yet is only seduced herself by her own freedom and love of life.

From a spiritual perspective the Daughter of Grails represents our soul's longing to merge into the depths and desires of our emotions and explore our inner dream-world. The energy of this card is that yearning, rather than the fulfillment of the desires. It is the scintillating hunger and glamour that captivates, drawing us into the irresistible ecstasy of the Everlasting. The process leads to the transformation and materialization of beauty and wonder through our emotions, just as the gentle water nourishes the flower and inspires it to blossom.

Shadow

Craving. Frustration. Jealousy. Envy. Lack of fulfillment. Heartbreak. Loss. Sadness. Melancholy. Imprisonment. Emotional instability. Loveless. Insensitivity. Graceless. Flattery. Addiction.

ACE OF KNIVES

Alchemy: Origin of the Air signs; Crown (Kether) of Air; Essence of Intellectual Consciousness
Kindred Spirits: The Daughter of Knives

Essence

The Essence of Thought. The mind. The root of consciousness. Mental activity. Clear perception. Divine inspiration. Objectivity. Truth. Justice. Differentiating. Divine authority. Determination. Triumph. Intellectual communication. Living in the clarity of the moment. Beauty and harmony. Purity. Health. Protection from fear. Liberty.

Message

The Ace of Knives brings divine inspiration and energy into being. The Divine Crown of Kether on the Tree of Life reflects its spiritual brightness into our mind. This clarity of thought and Will then creates its own reflection, allowing it to crystallize into matter. The Ace of Knives is the very source of the thought, as yet unformed, but being its unique essence. It is the seed of a thought that will eventually manifest in the visible world. The card is a representation of our unconscious energy becoming accessible to our conscious mind and coming into the crystal light of the intellect. When the card appears in a reading, it can be a sign that we can use intellectual reasoning to bring clarity to a situation. It can signify that in order to reach a perfect understanding we must connect with our unconscious energy and bring it within the light of our consciousness. Sometimes it denotes that there is a need for clarity, and that we must clear our mind of interference. By use of reason and objectivity, we must recognize the truth of an issue or name the unknown and the hidden. This Ace urges us to use our deeply

focused thoughts and the powers of our mind to overcome misunderstanding, fears, or challenges. We should analyse the situation clearly and logically, without personal judgment, emotion, or fear, using both our unconscious intuition and our conscious mind. A firm choice or decision needs to be made.

Often the Ace of Knives appears when a thought seed has been planted in our unconscious, which will eventually manifest in our actual life. At this stage we will probably be unaware of this thought seed, but it will gradually seep into our conscious thoughts. This is a hidden truth or secret understanding that will develop into sharp clarity. The card can also be a sign that a past thought seed is now ready to materialize; this could appear as a brilliant idea, an astounding new understanding, a secret gift, an irresistible offer, or a startling synchronicity. The Ace of Knives also relates to truth and justice and can be a signal that we need to be honest, or it can relate to a revelation that makes everything suddenly make sense. Sometime a challenge is indicated in which we must stand firm and focused with honesty and courage. In general this card is about clean, sharp clarity; a search for truth; and a need to penetrate to the heart of a matter. It is concerned with our Will, and with cutting through entanglements with firm and sharp perception—these entanglements can include situations, external or internal issues, emotional confusion, or life's problems. When this card appears, a powerful mental force has come into play that will bring swift change or understanding. It also indicates that the time is right for us to cut away past habits or behaviour and start anew with clarity and resolve.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Ace of Knives represents the combined force of the creative spirit and active Will of the Ace of Scepters and the passive unconscious and emotion of the Ace of Grails. Their union gives birth to the seed of thought that is the Ace of Knives. This ignites the divine

spark of inspiration in our consciousness, illustrated as the white diamond on the blade. The dark blade itself is symbolic of earthly manifestation by which the spark penetrates its Will into reality at the very point of the blade. This process of penetration of Will into the rich nutrition of the earth in order to conceive is a metaphor of the Vampyre myth. Thrusting active fire energy (the Sun) and reflective passive water energy (the Moon) combine to create the roots of thought. This means that our minds desire to thrust forward patterns of thinking into unfathomable eternal truths. Our minds are not just abstract intellect but the channel between Will and emotion, between the conscious and the unconscious. Our intellectual powers are fed by the heights of spiritual Will and the depths of our unconscious feelings, resulting in the perfect equilibrium of perception.

As the reflection to the Ace of Skulls, this card represents the formative realm of ideas behind the material realm of structure. It is the foundation and blueprint for the world of matter. Our mind carves out personal perceptions from the immeasurable unconscious to give the world meaning for us and to express our unique spirit. By drawing the unconscious into the conscious we can create meaning and foundation, keeping our reality from seeping back into the unfathomable waters of the Everlasting. Whatever we feel, think, and believe to be truth becomes our truth. The Ace of Knives teaches us that we have the inner vision and resources to overcome anything, and that our minds have the ability to create and shape our own reality. A clean incision cuts away past entanglements, old myths, and fears.

Shadow

Uninspired, pessimistic, or confused. Chaos or oppression. Restless, stressful, or tense. Weak Will, imbalance, or dullness of mind. Punishment, affliction, and negative or destructive thoughts. Lack of objectivity. Mental anguish or mental illness. A malicious mental attack. Being held back.

TWO OF KNIVES

Alchemy: Moon in Libra; Wisdom (Chokmah) of Air; Energy of Intellectual Consciousness
Kindred Spirits: Yezalel; Mebahel

Essence

The Energy of Thought. Balance and counterbalance. Peace restored. Equality. Collaboration. Change or reorganization. Intuitive choices and decisions. Mental stability. Inner peace. Constructive criticism. Calm, confidence, and grace. Discussion and a connection of minds. Impartiality. Legality. A contradiction or paradox.

Message

The second of the Knife cards refers to peace, retired balance, and equilibrium. It signifies that great balance and calm can be achieved. This may refer to spiritual, emotional, mental, or material peace, depending on its position in the spread. The card is about arrangement, organizing, and maintaining perfect balance between two seemingly contradictory perspectives or choices. It involves a peaceful reconciliation of the energies involved in an issue or situation. We must weigh both sides of a problem with impartial fairness in order to reach a solution. By balancing the forces in our mind, apportioning justice, equalizing, and compensating, a contradictory situation is resolved peacefully. Like all Twos, the energy of this card is about the balance of polarities and the energy required to maintain constant development. The Two of Knives is also about determining truth from untruth, and so can refer to legal matters, deep discussions, debate, or making judgments. The card is teaching us that we should employ good management and organize and arrange things to overcome an issue or solve a problem.

The Two of Knives particularly relates to decisions made intuitively and having the skill of instinctively knowing how to deal with problems. When the card appears in a reading, we are being urged to unite opposing or different forces with perfect clarity and equilibrium. These polarities can be external or internal. We may need to find our own peace of mind or there may be inner blockages or contradictions that need to be resolved. Sometimes this card warns us that we are not seeing the truth or that something will appear in our lives only when we make a firm choice. The card can reconcile internal and external events, allowing for a wish to be granted. In general the Two of Knives refers to clarification of different positions or energies. Every problem holds its own perfect solution; reaching this solution can sometimes involve sacrifice or suffering, but this is the process that leads to inner peace and pleasure. Pain holds the gift of beauty. This card also relates to a need to listen to another point of view or a warning that we are blocking people out or hiding our feelings. By working together calmly and naturally, a connection of minds and hearts is achieved.

Analysis & Symbolism

The Vampyre sleeps silently in the tomb as the blood from his last victim flows within him. This new life energy brings tremendous tranquility and stability, causing the old black blood of fear to bleed out from his sight—bringing new clarity and vitality. He is blindfolded, referring to introspection, inner clarity, and peace of mind. He does not need to use his conscious thinking intellect to solve problems if he employs the powers of unconscious intuition. He holds two knives across his heart as a symbol of reconciliation and balance. This death pose illustrates sacrifice, either for others or to sever his mind from disruptive thoughts. It is also a defensive pose, symbolising a need to draw into our inner resources or withdraw from a situation and protect our feelings.

Because of the intense activity of our mind, thoughts can become our enemy and can torment us. By stilling the mind and disconnecting from anxiety, we cause this poison to dissipate and old shadows to fade, while taming the mind to create new calm and positive brainwaves. The forming of these new channels in the mind is symbolised by the framework of roots in the painting. Whatever we think to be truth becomes the truth; our only task is to define with clarity what our inner truth is, or what we choose it to be. By stilling the mind through deep relaxation we can restore peace and balance, thereby energizing any chosen thought into reality. In the silence of our inner thoughts we are balanced and guided by our unconscious with a sense of well-being (Moon in Libra). The first revelation of thought flows down from the Ace and is given definition, though the energy is still very subtle and almost just a mood or insight, untouched by external forces. By reducing thoughts to a steady, natural pulse we free ourselves from our worries and find tranquility of the mind. Inner opposites are balanced, bringing everything to an equilibrium of clearer comprehension. This gives us the ability to penetrate to the heart of a matter.

Shadow

Mental tension, stress, or torment. Tension or discord, a negative atmosphere, quarrels, conflicts, and destructive criticism. Lack of confidence. A stalemate, a contradiction, or conflicting forces. Defensiveness, blocking someone out, or retreating from a challenge or inner conflict. Self-deception or hiding from a truth. A paradox.